

Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities

A proposal for systemic improvement in personnel development
based on
Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities

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Preface

Michigan is committed to improved performance for all students. To this end, standards and indicators for student performance and for system accountability have been, and remain, the highest priorities. The State Board of Education recently adopted Goals for Special Education which support these overarching priorities. The Goals address issues specific to improved performance for children and youth with disabilities. In order to achieve these Goals, a strategic improvement planning process has been initiated.

This strategic improvement planning process has, at its core, the structure of a state improvement plan (SIP) as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The nature of our improvement strategy, however, dictates that Michigan's plan will go beyond the scope of mere compliance with IDEA. The SIP, Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities, as developed in 1998 for submission to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), is not a final product. It is a beginning. As an ongoing process, strategic improvement strategies will be compared to student performance data, measured against state goals and priorities, and revised to guarantee continuous improvement.

In order to support the improvement process, a state improvement grant (SIG) has been prepared for submission to the OSEP. This SIG, Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities, presents an integrated design to bring both high quality and efficiency to a system of comprehensive personnel development. The design of the model is validated practices for targeted improvement and personnel development. The personnel development strategies are tied to improved student performance. Driving the targeted priorities are quantitative and qualitative data which delineate comprehensive needs for improving the delivery system and ultimately improving student performance.

These data have been used to identify many needs and priorities for addressing systemic improvements. Three priorities have been targeted for immediate attention:

1. Improving transition practices
2. Implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports
3. Addressing personnel shortages, including underrepresentation of personnel reflecting the diversity of the student population

Securing federal funding through the SIG will provide the resources necessary to implement the model and assure improved skills and competencies for those who educate and support children and youth with disabilities. Improved performance of students is the ultimate result. Collectively, Michigan's Plan and Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities are simply referred to as Michigan's SIP/SIG.

Background

Systemic Development

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) on June 4, 1997, presented the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) with a unique opportunity to improve the delivery of programs and services to children and youth with special needs in Michigan. This opportunity became available due to educational reform efforts on a variety of fronts.

Beginning in 1989, Michigan responded to the national educational study reported in "A Nation at Risk" and the National Governors' Conference report, "Goals 2000," by enacting Public Act 25, Michigan's education reform legislation. This legislative action set priorities for all public schools in Michigan and required schools to focus on improved student performance and accountability to the community. Public Act 25 became the catalyst for public education reform in Michigan and continues to be a priority in the state.

After the passage of Public Act 25, the OSE/EIS convened the statewide Special Education Delivery System Task Force (Task Force) to examine the entire special education delivery system. The Task Force established a number of goals which correlate with the goals of Public Act 25; to create a unified educational system, promote shared responsibility of all students by all staff, train all school personnel to work effectively with all students, and establish a results-based educational system. After the Task Force published its final report, the OSE/EIS staff published an analysis document in 1996. These two documents have become the foundation for improvements to the special education delivery system.

Reauthorized IDEA was the focus of a September 1997 site visit to the OSE/EIS by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The outcome of that visit was an Implementation Plan outlining how Michigan would meet the new federal mandates. Rather than view the mandated improvements as a burden, the OSE/EIS and other special education stakeholders across the state recognized the opportunity to tie new federal requirements to recommended delivery system improvements.

Another unique opportunity for improvement presented itself in the form of a departmental reorganization. The OSE/EIS reorganized itself within a reorganized MDE to better meet the educational challenges of designing a delivery system that focuses on quality programming and student performance. A major feature of this effort was alignment with priorities established for general education and improvement in student performance for all students. Altogether, with the directives from Public Act 25, the IDEA, and the Task Force report and analysis, a comprehensive package of Goals for Special Education was presented and subsequently adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) during 1997-98.

Michigan has recently created a Consolidated School Improvement Plan for the state. This Plan incorporates aspects from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Perkins Act, and Title III School-to-Work. As the reauthorization of funding for federal education programs became more focused on improved student performance (e.g., Title I, Goals 2000, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Carl T. Perkins grants), school improvement and personnel development initiatives in Michigan were developed through a consolidated application format to ensure that local school districts and intermediate school districts were collaborating in aligning student goals, utilizing multi-source data for decision making, and focusing on improved student performance.

Although Michigan's special education programs and services are not included in the consolidated federal application process due to legislative requirements, Michigan is collaborating in efforts to improve performance for students with disabilities in the state's Plan.

Student Performance

The overarching theme for all school improvement activities is the demonstration of improved student performance. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) administers statewide assessments in grades four, five, seven, eight, and eleven in the areas of reading, writing, science, and mathematics. The assessment of social studies is scheduled to begin during the 1998-99 school year. It is the intent that the MEAP reflect the State Board of Education approved model core curriculum. In order to perform well on the assessments, therefore, it is imperative that students with disabilities have access to the same general curriculum as students without disabilities.

In addition, for students with performance issues not addressed in the general academic model core curriculum, the OSE/EIS has tentatively adopted performance expectations from the Addressing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN) for students with disabilities. The AUEN materials are an outgrowth of work that has been conducted to identify outcomes for students with disabilities in specific disability categories. The materials are noncategorical and organized around four levels of independence in major life roles that students with varying levels of impairments can be expected to achieve. Together, the model core curriculum and the AUEN performance expectations will provide Michigan with the infrastructure to develop assessments to measure the progress of all students.

State Improvement Plan and Grant

The OSE/EIS has conducted activities to meet the plan and grant criteria. A stakeholder event was held in May 1998 to identify critical aspects of early intervention, general education, and special education programs, including personnel development, which must be improved to enable students with disabilities to meet performance goals established by the state. Participants in this meeting included, in part, students with disabilities; parents, including representatives of Michigan's Parent Training and Information (PTI) centers; general and special education administrators; general and special education teachers; representatives of institutions of higher education, including Michigan's University Affiliated Program (UAP); personnel from state agencies; organizations which represent related service personnel; representatives of state special education organizations and associations; local school boards; and the State Board of Education Vice President. Eight critical areas for state improvement were identified and subsequently aligned with six priorities of the 1997-98 State Board of Education Action Plan. Stakeholders also participated in content development and review processes as Michigan's SIP/SIG developed.

The OSE/EIS determined that in order to incorporate all the various aspects of system improvement, the Plan, focus on:

- Coordination of the various state initiatives, regulations, and revisions, as well as the IDEA mandates.
- Facilitation of sustained learning and development of local capacity to assure quality services for all students.
- Development of a flexible, dynamic system that facilitates both current initiatives and future needs as they arise.

- Response to input from educational stakeholders in the field.
- Assurances of collaboration with other agencies that serve children and youth with disabilities.

The grant application requires that a state improvement grant (SIG) is supported by a state improvement plan (SIP). Michigan's SIP is "Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities." The SIG, if awarded, will support "Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities." The title of this combined initiative is "Michigan's SIP/SIG" which is meant to show the relationship between these two concepts.

Introduction

The purpose of the state improvement plan, Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities, is to provide the strategic direction for the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS), as well as other stakeholders concerned with the education of students with disabilities. The SIP will serve as a catalyst for state and local improvement. The SIP was developed in collaboration with a core writing team and a review team and is based upon broad stakeholder input and analysis of data. The core writing and review teams include university faculty, parents of students with disabilities, special educators, members of advocacy organizations, and OSE/EIS staff.

An unprecedented stakeholder-based event was held in collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to set the direction for the SIP. Over one hundred individuals representing teachers, administrators, parents, advocacy organizations, professional organizations, state agencies, representatives of institutions of higher education, and state and local boards of education gathered to work with students with disabilities to define the critical areas for improvement. The day and a half long process began with individual identification of the "Prouds and Sorrys" regarding the special education service system. Individuals then went into assigned, mixed groups to share their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of special education in Michigan. All the prouds and sorrys were posted on a wall for everyone to see and reflect upon. These reflections resulted in overhead presentations created by each small group which set the stage for identifying the critical areas for improvement. Eight critical areas were identified: Early Intervention and Prevention; Data and Evaluation; Collaboration; Individualized Education Program (IEP); Curriculum; Transition; Training; and Finance. Small groups were then convened to set priorities and develop strategies within each of the eight critical areas. The enthusiasm of the participants and the wealth of information generated by the group have served as the driving forces behind the SIP. The participants have had an opportunity to review the SIP/SIG before its submission. Many of the participants in this planning event have agreed to partner with the Department of Education in the implementation of the SIP/SIG.

The gathering of student performance and personnel data from diverse units within the Department of Education was also a major undertaking. The data analysis that comprises the first three sections of Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Student's with Disabilities represents substantial work by a number of individuals to create a picture of how children and youth with disabilities are faring in special education. It is the first time this information has been gathered into one document.

The document itself is organized into two sections:

1. The Identification of Needs

- The Performance of Students with Disabilities
- Personnel Supply and Demand
- Major Findings Related to Federal and State Monitoring

2. The Plan of Action

- The Partnership Agreement
- Systemic Improvement Activities
- Strategies

Relevant Michigan State Board of Education policies, priorities, and goals for special education are cited at the beginning of each analysis in the needs sections. The State Board of Education policies which focus on improving schools and raising student achievement are:

- Coordinate and Focus All Resources to Improve Pupil Performance
- Set Performance Expectations and Measure Progress
- Base Accreditation on High Levels of Pupil Achievement and Continuous Improvement
- Strengthen Teacher and Administrator Preparation Programs
- Base Professional Development on Pupil Achievement Factors
- Foster Interagency Collaboration and Community Involvement
- Streamline Reporting and Focus on Performance Monitoring
- Organization of the Department of Education

The State Board of Education has also developed priorities which serve as the basis of the Board's 1997-98 Action Plan. These priorities are to:

1. Raise student achievement in Michigan;
2. Promote options designed to improve student achievement;
3. Hold students, schools, and districts accountable for improving student achievement;
4. Update and upgrade teacher and administrator preparation;
5. Provide general planning and coordination of extended education; and
6. Assist the Department of Education in its focus on State Board of Education priorities.

Goals for special education, which are aligned with the priorities and policies for all students, have been adopted by the State Board of Education during 1997-98. The State Board of Education policies, priorities, and goals for special education provide a strong foundation for the State Improvement Plan and Grant.

The Collaborative School Improvement Process, as developed by Eastern Michigan University, Monroe Intermediate School District, Washtenaw Intermediate School District, Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, and Wayne State University, provides an outline of beliefs and assumptions about the improvement process which will serve as guiding principles for the SIP/SIG as it is implemented:

1. Meaningful change occurs as a process, not as an event.
2. Individuals behave the way they do because it makes sense to them. Every person is logical in his/her own context.
3. Individuals affected by decisions must be involved in making them. Shared decision making builds personal ownership and collective commitment for those involved.
4. The most critical variable in effective teaching/leading is the extent to which one can interact with and release the potential of others.
5. Effective change is a human process, involving the individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions which can cause disequilibrium, thus necessitating various support systems.
6. Top administrators alone cannot create effective change, but they can and must be an integral part as they facilitate change.
7. Leadership skills cannot be presumed; any change model must provide for leadership development.

8. For significant change to occur in behavior, formalized outside intervention is necessary; continuous communication is essential to incorporate behavioral change.
9. Participants should incorporate current literature, research, and practice in their deliberations.
10. Although external consultant help is necessary and important, direction for change must come from local sources.
11. An organization's fundamental beliefs are the driving forces and the ultimate "whys" behind every action.

Michigan's SIP is an important beginning for all stakeholders concerned with the education of all students. It signals the start of a new era in education, one that no longer only asks "Are all students with disabilities identified?" or, "Are procedures in place to assure due process rights?" but also asks "How many students leave special education services as independent, adjusted young adults?" and, "How are transition services assisting students with employment options which match their talents and skills?" It is the locally-generated answers to these questions that must, and will, drive Michigan's efforts to improve the performance of students with disabilities.

The Performance of Students with Disabilities

Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessment

State Board of Education Policies

- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance
- Set performance expectations and measure progress
- Base accreditation on high levels of pupil achievement and continuous improvement

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan
- Promote options designed to improve student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Increase the participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments.
- Develop guidelines for alternate assessment for students for whom participation on statewide assessments is not appropriate.

The statewide assessment in Michigan is known as the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). The MEAP assesses students in the areas of reading and mathematics in grades four and seven, and science and writing in grades five and eight. The High School MEAP Tests are administered to grade eleven students in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science. All of the tests are criterion-referenced based upon the State Board of Education approved *Model Core Curriculum Outcomes* (1991). The area of social studies is scheduled to be implemented during the 1998-1999 school year at grades five, eight, and eleven (see Appendix 1).

Beginning with the 1992-93 school year, schools were provided the option of testing all students with disabilities; if students met exclusion criteria, their scores would be excluded from all of the summary reports produced. With this option in place, a large number of students with disabilities are now taking the MEAP tests. Currently, the state does not produce separate summary reports for students with disabilities. However, it has done so in the past. Over a 15 year period, MEAP scores were separated for both sets of students. Five years ago this practice was discontinued because of the lack of use of these data. In order to obtain that information for this SIP, the OSE/EIS performed its own statistical analysis of the data. Beginning with fiscal year 1998-99, the contractor for the MEAP will once again make available these comparative data.

All students have the right to be tested unless a parent or guardian requests an exemption. If a parent or guardian wishes to exempt a student with disabilities from testing, this decision must be considered by the student's individualized education program (IEP) Team. The IEP Team will determine if a student will participate in all or part of the MEAP and will list any necessary accommodations. The school may not exempt a general education student from testing; only the parent or guardian may do so. The school has the option to have the student's score excluded from the school, district, and state summary reports if the student is found eligible for special education services through an IEP and receives 49% or less of his or her reading/English instruction per week through general education. In the time period examined for this analysis (1996 and 1998), 45% of students with disabilities participated in some portion of the MEAP (Table 1). The percentage of students with disabilities participating in the MEAP ranges from a high of 62% (seventh grade reading and mathematics) to a low of 27% (eleventh grade writing).

Data on the use of accommodations by students when taking the MEAP is not a standard report. The MEAP student answer document (scanning form) only allows for documentation of whether an accommodation was made. The answer document does not indicate whether the student received multiple accommodations, or the nature of the specific accommodation. The only specific accommodation that can currently be noted on the student answer document is if the student uses a Braille edition of the test. The percent of students with disabilities participating in the MEAP without an accommodation is very high, ranging from 62% in science at the elementary level to 86% in writing at the middle school level. The fewest number of accommodations were received in the area of writing at all grade levels tested. It is not clear if the students taking the MEAP assessments are not receiving accommodations because they do not need an accommodation, if appropriate accommodations are not being offered, or students are refusing accommodations. It is clear that members of IEP Teams need more training and support in order to make informed decisions about appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities taking the MEAP assessments.

Table 1: MEAP Data — Students with Disabilities

| Subject | Grade Level | Student Count | Percent Tested | Percent without Accommodations | Percent with Accommodations |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1998: | | | | | |
| Reading & Mathematics | 4 | 16,423 | .46 (7,473) | .63 (4,686) | .37 (2,787) |
| Science | 5 | 15,564 | .52 (8,066) | .62 (5,037) | .38 (3,029) |
| Writing | 5 | 15,564 | .43 (6,733) | .82 (5,549) | .18 (1,184) |
| Reading & Mathematics | 7 | 14,011 | .62 (8,614) | .72 (6,169) | .28 (2,445) |
| Science | 8 | 13,358 | .53 (7,089) | .75 (5,279) | .25 (1,810) |
| Writing | 8 | 13,358 | .56 (7,459) | .86 (5,393) | .14 (2,066) |
| 1996: | | | | | |
| Reading | 11 | 8,780 | .29 (2,531) | .68 (1,723) | .32 (778) |
| Writing | 11 | 8,780 | .27 (2,339) | .75 (1,747) | .30 (592) |
| Mathematics | 11 | 8,780 | .29 (2,506) | .71 (1,790) | .29 (716) |
| Science | 11 | 8,780 | .29 (2,548) | .69 (1,767) | .31 (781) |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

While every child with a disability is not expected to participate in the MEAP, it is expected that a substantial majority (about 85%) will participate. Several strategies must be implemented to improve the participation rate including: (1) raising awareness of the MEAP among special educators and parents of students with disabilities; (2) raising awareness among educators and parents that students with disabilities are expected to participate in the MEAP to the extent appropriate for each individual student; (3) working with educators to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the extent appropriate, especially those students in categorical classrooms and separate facilities; and (4) providing training in the selection and use of appropriate supports and accommodations.

The following table demonstrates that the overall performance of students with disabilities on the MEAP is not as high as the students reported in the state level summary. Across all grade levels tested, students receiving services from special education whose scores were included in the state summary report did significantly better than those students who qualified to have their scores excluded from the state summary report. By increasing the appropriate use of accommodations and access to the general curriculum, the performance of students with disabilities will improve. Michigan's statewide Parent Training and Information Center, the Citizen's Alliance to Uphold Special Education, observes that the general curriculum is not often considered during the IEP process for students in separate categorical classrooms, especially for students in separate facilities. Summary data on the percentage of students achieving satisfactory performance are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Most Recent MEAP "Satisfactory" Performance Percentages
Grades 4-8 data are from Winter 1998 • Grade 11 data are from Spring 1996

| MEAP Test | Overall for State % Satisfactory | Students with Disabilities % Satisfactory |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Grade 4 Reading | 58.6 | 17.1 |
| Grade 7 Reading | 48.8 | 19.7 |
| Grade 11 Reading* | 40.2 | 7.3 |
| Grade 4 Mathematics | 74.1 | 26.8 |
| Grade 7 Mathematics | 61.4 | 13.2 |
| Grade 11 Mathematics* | 47.7 | 7.0 |
| Grade 5 Science* | 40.8 | 9.3 |
| Grade 8 Science* | 22.0 | 2.8 |
| Grade 11 Science* | 34.4 | 3.5 |
| Grade 5 Writing* | 64.3 | 19.7 |
| Grade 8 Writing* | 69.0 | 20.0 |
| Grade 11 Writing* | 32.0 | 5.8 |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

* Uses a different label; these refer to student performance as "proficient."

Alternate Assessment

Michigan initiated the Alternate Assessment Project to begin development of an alternate assessment for students receiving special education services for whom the MEAP assessments or district-wide assessments of student achievement are not appropriate. Historically, large numbers of students receiving special education services have not participated in the MEAP assessments. Recent developments in the area of educational policy require schools to revisit this practice. All schools in Michigan, including specialized schools, are required to make available Annual Education Reports that include measures of student progress.

For students with significant disabilities, Michigan has invested a considerable amount of time and training in the development of outcomes for special education. Since 1990, outcomes and related assessment materials have been used for students receiving services in all twelve eligibility categories recognized in Michigan. The outcomes materials facilitate the process of aligning instructional practices and curriculum with the exit performance expectations.

The categorical outcomes materials have evolved into a four-level document known as *Addressing the Unique Needs of Students with Disabilities* (AUEN). The AUEN materials are non-categorical and organized around the four levels of independence in major life roles that students with varying levels of impairments can realistically be expected to achieve. While maintaining the focus of the original outcomes, particularly for students who function with severe or moderate levels of cognitive deficit, the AUEN presents a standard terminology, format, and organization of the materials; data collection procedures; and a Rating Scale format and procedures across the four levels of independence. Together, the Model Content Standards for Curriculum and the AUEN performance expectations provide Michigan with the required infrastructure needed to develop reliable and valid assessments to measure the progress of all students (see Appendix 2).

IDEA 97 aligns with Goals 2000 and the School to Work Opportunities Act by requiring that students with disabilities be included in statewide assessment. Assessing and reporting on the progress of all students is a major challenge facing Michigan. The number of students with disabilities participating in the MEAP must increase substantially in order to meet the target of approximately 85% participation. However, increasing participation in the MEAP is not the only need; it is also critical to improve the performance of students with disabilities whether it is measured through the MEAP or an alternate assessment for students who cannot participate in the MEAP.

Needs related to assessment —

- Increase the number of students with disabilities participating in the MEAP, with or without accommodation.
- Improve the performance of students with disabilities on the MEAP.
- Develop and pilot an alternate assessment for students with disabilities for whom participation in all or part of the statewide assessment is not appropriate.
- Improve the data collection system to allow for more accurate, in-depth analysis of the performance of students with disabilities on MEAP assessments.
- Improve the ability of educators to analyze and use data for instructional planning, school improvement, and statewide accountability.

These needs, reflecting the data on student assessment, are supported by stakeholder input gathered at Kalamazoo in May 1998. Lack of appropriate use of accommodations, lack of access to the general curriculum and related content standards and benchmarks, and poor or no use of available data were cited as concerns. Recommendations stressed the importance of helping teachers, parents, and administrators link assessment results to student learning in meaningful ways.

Dropout and Graduation Rates

State Board of Education Policies

- Set performance expectations and measure progress
- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance
- Foster interagency collaboration and community involvement

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan
- Promote options designed to improve student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who graduate.
- Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school.
- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate professional development resources which utilize research-based and proven curricular models and instructional strategies.

There are a host of definitional problems when dealing with "rates" for students with disabilities. Three difficulties that were encountered with Michigan's data on graduation and dropout rates for students with disabilities include:

1. Some students with disabilities, due to the nature of their disabilities and local graduation requirements, do not graduate from school. However, this does not necessarily mean these students become dropouts. There are students who continue in school as long as they are legally allowed and then transition to adult life, supported in part through services from other agencies.
2. Currently, the data for students receiving services through special education is not collected by grade level. In fact, some students with disabilities participate in non-graded programs. Thus, there is no simple comparison to see who was enrolled as a freshman in high school and who graduated four years later. Reports simply indicate that a student left school because of graduation.
3. Drop out data are even more nebulous than graduation data. A statewide definition of dropout does not exist, so the collection of dropout data varies from district to district. Schools only report students who have officially dropped out of school, in both general and special education. It is suspected that many students drop out of school unofficially.

Many special education students graduate at 19 and 20 years of age, later than their general education peers. Some remain beyond age 21. Transition services, which support progress to adult roles, vary considerably by community. When transition services are not available, or do not meet the needs of the students, some students and families prefer to continue services through special education.

Graduation or completion of high school is a critical factor leading to favorable post-school outcomes, especially access to postsecondary educational opportunities. Participation in

postsecondary education generally leads to higher wages for students with disabilities. In the federal count data, collected in 1997-98, 40.3% of students with disabilities graduated or completed their program. The Michigan School Report (1997) reported that the average graduation/completion rate for the general population of students in the school year 1996-97 was 76.2%.

The 1993 National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education (NLTS) found that most students with disabilities who dropped out of school did so due to repeated course failure, which made it difficult for the students to earn the course credits to graduate. In 1997-98, 18.8% of students with disabilities officially dropped out of school in Michigan. Students with emotional impairment had the highest dropout rate, 28.0%. The NLTS also found that students with emotional impairment were at the greatest risk for dropping out, again primarily due to course failure.

In Michigan, when the graduation/completion rates for students receiving services from special education are examined by disability category, most student groups had a higher completion rate than dropout rate. The major exception to this trend were students with emotional impairment, who had a higher dropout rate than completion rate. The 1996-97 state average dropout rate for the general student population was 6.6%.

There is a significant discrepancy between the graduation/completion rates and dropout rates of students with disabilities and those of the general school population. Increasing expectations for students with disabilities, while simultaneously supporting greater understanding and use of accommodations and assistive technology, is one factor in improving the graduation/completion rates for students with disabilities.

Another critical factor is relating curriculum content and instruction to work and adult life roles. The NLTS found that students with disabilities who took four or more vocational courses in the same skill area (e.g., auto repair) had improved post-school outcomes. Students with disabilities need to see strong connections between their instructional program and the world of work and community, especially as they enter the middle and high school years.

The stakeholders who set the SIP priorities at the Kalamazoo event identified transition as a critical area in need of improvement, especially in building the interagency frameworks needed to improve the transition process for students and strengthening the linkages between transition plans, person-centered plans, and self-determination skills. The importance of early access to vocational programming and the development of student leadership, as it relates to participation in their own IEPs, were also emphasized.

Needs related to dropout and graduation —

- Improve the data collection system to ensure more consistent collection of dropout and graduation data for students with disabilities.
- Improve early identification of students with learning differences.
- Improve the use of validated instructional strategies for students with learning differences.
- Improve access to the general curriculum and to accommodations which support learning for students with learning differences.
- Improve transition planning and services from school to work and adult life roles.

- Improve access to vocational programs and career preparation opportunities.

These needs, reflecting the data on dropout and graduation rates, are supported by stakeholder input gathered at Kalamazoo. Attention to prevention and early identification of students with disabilities and learning differences and awareness of proven instructional strategies were identified as concerns. Lack of appropriate use of accommodations, lack of access to the general curriculum and related content standards and benchmarks, and poor or no use of available data were also cited as concerns.

Suspension and expulsion

State Board of Education Policies

- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance
- Set performance expectations and measure progress

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan
- Promote options designed to improve student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Increase participation and performance of students with disabilities in career and work force development programs.
- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate information and training on positive behavioral intervention strategies which enhance the learning environment for all students.

A statewide study of suspension and expulsion rates for all students was conducted in the spring of 1996 as required in the Michigan School Code. The results were as follows:

Suspension

Approximately 6.2% of all students in Michigan were suspended during the second semester of the 1995-96 school year. Suspensions ranged from one hour to no more than a total of ten days. Specific data on the number of students with disabilities represented in this population were not collected in this portion of the study. The greatest number of students were suspended for the following reasons:

- Disrupting education (25.5%)
- Fighting (16.9%)
- Truancy (9.5%)

Expulsion

Less than 1% of all students in Michigan were expelled during the school year. The greatest number of students (63.9%) were expelled for the following reasons:

- Concealed weapons (32.8%)
- Illegal substances such as drugs/narcotics (16.3%)
- Non-aggravated assault (14.8%)

In 40.4% of the expulsion cases, a law enforcement agency was asked to follow up. In 32.9% of the cases, students were referred to county mental health and social services.

Students with disabilities were reported in less than one-half of one percent of the total expulsion cases. Expulsion data suggest that students with disabilities make up a small percentage of the total number of students expelled from school. In 43.5% of the cases, the expulsion was deemed unrelated to the student's disability. A due process hearing was convened in 10.9% of the cases, and an IEP Team was convened in 26.1% of the cases. Of the total number expelled, the largest category of students with disabilities expelled were students with learning disabilities (82.6%), followed by students with emotional impairment (13.0%). Remember, however, that 28% of students with emotional impairment were not in school to be expelled.

The suspension data could not be disaggregated, pointing out a need to collect baseline data in this area to determine whether a problem exists for students with disabilities. When reviewing areas in which suspension and expulsion occurs, it is clear that collaboration between special and general education is essential to all students. The use of functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention strategies will likely impact the suspension and expulsion rates for all students, including students with disabilities, especially those suspended for disrupting education or fighting and those expelled for non-aggravated assault.

The Kalamazoo event participants expressed their desire to keep all children engaged in learning in their classrooms. They identified the use of positive behavioral interventions as an important strategy to decrease suspension and expulsion rates.

Needs related to suspension and expulsion —

- Improve data collection regarding suspension to allow for analysis of suspension issues and rates for students with disabilities.
- Increase the understanding and use of functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention among special educators, general educators, parents, and school administrators.
- Include positive behavioral interventions in IEPs for students with disabilities.
- Provide training in functional behavioral assessments and positive behavioral intervention to special educators, general educators, parents, and school administrators.
- Provide training regarding accommodations and appropriate supports and accommodations in the IEP process.

These needs, reflecting the data on suspension and expulsion, are supported by stakeholder input. Attention to prevention and early identification of students with learning differences and behavioral needs and improving awareness of and skills in using proven strategies to meet these needs were identified as concerns. Lack of accurate data and the appropriate use of data for systemic improvement were also cited.

Participation in General Education and Natural Environments (Least Restrictive Environment)

State Board of Education Policies

- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance
- Base accreditation on high levels of pupil achievement and continuous improvement

State Board of Education Priorities

- Promote options designed to improve student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate professional development resources which utilize research-based and proven curricular models and instructional strategies.
- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate information and training on functional accommodations for students with disabilities to increase participation in accelerated courses and advanced learning opportunities.
- Assure that preschool children with disabilities are educated in settings with their peers to the extent appropriate.
- Provide options for early childhood education placements for young children with disabilities.

Students receiving special education services are primarily served in general education buildings (94%). A small percentage of students are served in separate special education buildings (5%) and other settings like hospitals, in home, or work study (1%). Examination of general education participation by disability category reveals that students with severe disabilities are the least likely to participate in general education settings; over half the population of students with severe mental impairment and severe multiple impairment are served in separate special education buildings. Conversely, students with speech, hearing, or vision impairments are most likely to receive their special education services while participating full-time in general education and are among the least likely to be served in separate facilities.

Of the students served in general education buildings, 39.2% receive special education services while participating full-time in general education. Over two-thirds of this group (68.7%) are in general education for at least half of their school day, while the other 31.3% are in general education less than half the time.

It is the policy of the State Board of Education to ensure the availability of a full continuum of services for students with disabilities. While the majority of students with disabilities are educated in general education settings, it remains unclear: (1) whether placement decisions are based upon each student's individual strengths and needs (both academic and social) rather than disability category, and (2) whether students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum regardless of the location of services. Further study is warranted to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment as defined by IDEA 97 and are participating in the general curriculum to the extent appropriate.

The IDEA 97 emphasizes the delivery of services to infants and toddlers in natural environments. Natural environments are settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disabilities. Statewide early intervention data (Part C of IDEA/*Early On*® Michigan) show that 67.9% of the infants and toddlers served on December 1, 1997, received most of their services in their home. School-based programs account for 23.6% of the service settings, while 3.0% are served in an outpatient health facility. Another 4.9% receive most of their services in a facility "Other" than those listed in the federal reporting codes. Sampling of those in the "Other" category indicates that most of these children are seen at community sites of the parents' choosing: churches, homes of friends, formal and informal early childhood play groups, etc. The other categories (inpatient hospital, day care, residential facility) each account for less than 1%.

Historically, there was a major shift in settings for early intervention services between December 1992 and December 1993. In 1992, 38% of the children were served in their homes and 57% in school-based settings. By the end of 1993, those percentages had nearly reversed; 57% were served in homes, and 35% were served in school-based settings. This shift coincided with full implementation of the Part C system in Michigan. The percentage served in homes has gradually increased to the 67.9% reported for December 1997.

Data collected by the OSE/EIS on children in special education from three to five years of age gives a slightly different picture. Homes or community sites account for 30.2% of settings (e.g., nursery school), 52.1% receive services in a general education building, and 17.7% receive services in a separate facility (predominately a special education building). Many general education buildings also house other early childhood programs such as the Michigan School Readiness Program and Head Start. These programs provide options for integrated activities. Nevertheless, these data again raise concerns about the opportunities very young children with disabilities have to interact with their age appropriate peers who do not have disabilities.

The Michigan School Readiness Program is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for four-year-old children "at-risk" of school failure. It is an appropriate setting for the inclusion of children with disabilities, or those suspected of having disabilities, because of the documented high quality of the program. Two funding streams support the program; 80% of the children are enrolled in public school programs with certified teachers who hold special endorsements in early childhood education. The training requirements for the early childhood endorsement are adopted from the NCATE/NAEYC guidelines and include work related to children with disabilities. The remainder of the children are enrolled in public and private child care settings, and their teachers must also complete the equivalent of a four year degree in early childhood education or child development. Evaluation of the Michigan School Readiness Program by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation indicates that children who participated in the program are more successful in kindergarten than similarly at-risk children who did not attend a high quality preschool program.

The IDEA 97 maintains the presumption that children and youth with disabilities are most appropriately educated with their peers without disabilities. Michigan supports the availability of a full continuum of services; however, many in Michigan are concerned that more children and youth with disabilities need opportunities to successfully participate in general education and natural environments. Participants in the Kalamazoo event noted that many successful models for least restrictive settings exist, but that the dissemination and implementation of promising practices is often slow.

Needs related to participation in general education and natural environments —

- Increase the participation of children and youth with disabilities in least restrictive settings.
- Improve the progress of students with disabilities in the general curriculum.
- Identify and implement validated supports for children and youth to assure success in all educational settings.
- Provide personnel development which prepares teachers to meet the needs of all students.
- Improve access to natural environments for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- Improve access to integrated settings for preschool age children with disabilities.

Early Identification and Intervention for Young Children with Disabilities

State Board of Education Policies

- Foster interagency collaboration and community involvement

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan
- Promote options designed to improve student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Improve early identification and academic support for students at risk of requiring special education.
- Improve interagency coordination of early intervention services and community supports for young children with disabilities and their families.
- Support policies and practices which improve coordination of services across agencies.

Michigan's early intervention services system, *Early On*®, emphasizes a collaborative, interagency approach to providing supports and services to infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delay and their families. As of December 1, 1997, *Early On*® was serving 5,597 children, or 1.38% of the three-year birth cohort. Approximately half of these children are eligible for special education. Michigan's target is to serve 2.2% of the birth cohort, a target obtained from a 1995 study of children with disabilities (Population Estimates: Birth-to-5 Children with Disabilities, Frank G. Bowe, The Journal of Special Education, Vol 28, No 4, pp 461-471).

To encourage identification and reporting of all children served through *Early On*®, Michigan adopted a change in 1994 to add to the snapshot count (children served on a specific date) a period count of all children served in the previous twelve months. This was deemed a better estimate, because infants and toddlers move through the system faster than a yearly count can track. The period count is now a part of the formula for allocation of funds to service areas. Using a 4-year birth cohort, 1.73% of infants and toddlers were served in 12-month period ending December 1, 1997. This percentage has grown steadily from .89% to the present 1.73%. In the same time, the snapshot percentage has changed from .83% to 1.38%.

At the local service area level, 31 of the 57 service areas (54%) reported serving more than the 2.2% target level for the period ending December 1, 1997. Overwhelmingly, the service areas with a smaller percentage served are the areas with large populations.

Early On® data also indicate that the growth in numbers served through *Early On*® comes from children not eligible for special education. The number of infants and toddlers served through *Early On*®, with eligibility for special education, has stayed constant in the 2,800 to 3,300 range since implementation of *Early On*®. The count of children in *Early On*® not served by special education has grown from 458 on December 1, 1993, to 2,829 on December 1, 1998. The increase comes from children served by hospitals and by health, mental health, and social services agencies. The OSE/EIS December 1, 1997, count data shows that 3,256 infants and toddlers and 18,877 preschoolers (3 to 5 years of age) were receiving special education services.

Early On® collects information on the age at inquiry, defined as the date a child is first identified. For the December 1, 1997 snapshot data collection, the statewide average age of children, when first identified, was 10.2 months. This is a decrease from the average age of 11.6 months on December 1, 1995. The decrease has mainly been caused by the early identification of children not eligible for special education. The average age at inquiry for this group decreased from 10.3 months in 1995 to 8.7 months in December 1997. Meanwhile, the average age at inquiry for those counted for both *Early On*® and special education improved slightly from 12.3 months to 11.9 months.

The majority (81.1% for the December 1, 1997, period count) of children served through *Early On*® leave the system when they turn three years old. Other reasons for leaving include moving (6.1%), completing the goals on the individualized family service plan (5.2%), parents withdrawing the child or inability to contact the family (6.9%), and death (.7%). Of the children

who leave at age three, approximately 80% are eligible for special education. Another 5% are known to receive other services. The remaining children (10.6%) are either not receiving services, or no information is available about their transition plans.

The Michigan School Readiness Program is funded entirely with state funds. Currently there is funding available for up to 21,638 children per year; this number is projected to rise to 23,251 in 1999-2000. A child may qualify for the program the year before kindergarten entry if s/he is characterized by two or more of 24 personal, health, family, or community risk factors. One of the risk factors is "diagnosed handicapping condition." Data submitted in the 1997-98 school year indicated that 5.17% of the enrolled children fit this category. In addition, 15.23% of the children are identified as "developmentally immature;" these are children who may be at-risk for special education services in the future. Children in the Michigan School Readiness Program may not be enrolled concurrently in a preschool special education program. They may, however, as part of the inclusive placement in the Michigan School Readiness Program, receive ancillary services, including related services.

Needs related to early identification and intervention for young children with disabilities —

- Study the age of identification of children with disabilities by disability category.
- Improve the interagency referral and identification levels of infants and toddlers to meet the target of identifying and serving 2.2% of the birth cohorts.

The stakeholders who met in Kalamazoo were proud of the efforts and successes made in Michigan by the early intervention system. They wished to see a seamless family-centered system develop for children with disabilities from birth to five years of age.

Over and Underrepresentation in Special Education

State Board of Education Policy

- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan
- Update and upgrade teacher and administrator preparation

State Board of Education Goals

- Reduce the number of minority students misplaced in special education.
- Respond to supply and demand needs in special education and to the growing need for models which respond to the increasing diversity of the student population.

A good deal of national attention has been given to the over representation of African American students in special education. In Michigan, 18.39% of the total general student population is African American; 17.9% of the special education population is African American. While this is not a significant overall difference, there are discrepancies within certain disability areas. This is especially true for the disability category of mental impairment. In response to a national concern, OSE/EIS conducted an analysis of racial/ethnic representation under a grant from WESTAT. The cursory examination of the data suggests that: (1) there are fewer students, from the population as a whole, classified with mental impairment than would be expected by intellectual assessment alone; and (2) within this disability category, African American students are represented at a higher rate than other groups.

The federal definition of mental impairment includes two key elements: (1) subaverage intellectual functioning that is concomitant with (2) impairment in adaptive behavior. For special education eligibility, Michigan rules add a third element; scores on standardized achievement testing in reading and arithmetic must fall within the lowest six percentile. From the first element above, subaverage intellectual functioning is defined as functioning at or below two standard deviations of the expected norm. In a normal distribution, this captures 2.28% of all students. There are over 1.6 million students attending Michigan's public schools. Of these students, we would expect that (based on intellectual assessment alone) 2.28% or 38,309 students would fall into the range of mental impairment. Michigan reported only 27,175 students with mental impairment. Using this percentage, all racial/ethnic groups were computed. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Students Enrolled in Michigan Public Schools With and Without Mental Impairment in 1996

| Ethnic Group* | All Students in Michigan | Expected Percent with Mental Impairment | Expected Number of Students with Mental Impairment | Actual Number of Students with Mental Impairment | Actual Percent |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------|
| African American | 312,205 | 2.28 | 7,118 | 7,532 | 2.41 |
| Asian | 26,065 | 2.28 | 594 | 349 | 1.34 |
| White | 1,276,756 | 2.28 | 29,110 | 18,433 | 1.44 |
| Hispanic | 48,064 | 2.28 | 1,096 | 639 | 1.33 |
| Native American | 17,127 | 2.28 | 390 | 222 | 1.30 |
| Total | 1,680,217 | 2.28 | 38,309 | 27,175 | 1.62 |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

*Ethnic groups are determined by federal reporting requirements

The number of projected students in each ethnic group was subtracted from the actual number of identified students (column 5 above). Table 4 illustrates the discrepancy in the number of students represented in the category of mental impairment. Using the two standard deviation projection, it could be expected to find an additional 168 Native American students. The only group that reached the projected number of students was the African American population. There were 7,532 African American students, compared to an expected 7,118.

**Table 4: Students with Mental Impairment
Under/Over Represented in 1996**

| Ethnic Group* | Expected Number of Students with Mental Impairment | Actual Number of Students with Mental Impairment | Discrepancy in Number of Students | Percent Under/ Over Representation |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| African American | 7,118 | 7,532 | 414 | 5.81 |
| Asian | 594 | 349 | (245) | (41.27) |
| White | 29,110 | 18,433 | (10,677) | (36.68) |
| Hispanic | 1,096 | 639 | (457) | (41.69) |
| Native American | 390 | 222 | (168) | (43.15) |
| Total | 38,309 | 27,175 | (11,133) | (29.06) |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

*Ethnic groups are determined by federal reporting requirements

To provide a further understanding of what these discrepancies may mean, a percentage was computed. The number observed was divided by the number expected. This provides a percent above or below the expected value. With this computation, it can be seen that African Americans had 5% more students in the mental impairment category. In addition, using the expected value approach, Michigan could have a population of approximately 30% more students who are eligible for special education services under the category of mental impairment. The overall results for the other racial/ethnic groups raise some significant issues such as:

Why are some groups underrepresented?

Why are African American students represented at a higher rate in relation to other racial and ethnic groups?

Are students who could be identified with mental impairment being identified in other disability categories in Michigan?

What are the effects of the other two elements in the definition of mental impairment, i.e., adaptive behavior and achievement in arithmetic and reading?

Needs related to over and underrepresentation —

- Study the apparent discrepancy in the racial/ethnic distribution of students with disabilities who have mental impairment to determine whether some racial/ethnic groups are underrepresented or overrepresented based on discrimination.
- Study the placement of students in categories of mental impairment in relation to the eligibility criteria in Michigan.
- Report on the findings and determine solutions.

The stakeholders who met in Kalamazoo identified concerns about early intervention and prevention of learning failure, the appropriate use of data and evaluation, and the application of proven prevention, intervention and instructional strategies. These concerns are validated through these data on over and underrepresentation by category of impairment and by group. Resources are available in Michigan to address solutions to school failure and misplacement in special education.

Postsecondary Education Participation, Employment, and Other Post-School Outcomes

State Board of Education Policies

- Coordinate and focus all resources to improve pupil performance
- Foster interagency collaboration and community involvement

State Board of Education Priorities

- Raise student achievement in Michigan

State Board of Education Goals

- Increase participation and performance of students with disabilities in career and work force development programs.
- Improve and support development of skills acquired through education to relevant community life.
- Improve interagency coordination and involvement in transition from extended education to community life.
- Increase the use of local, state, and federal resources for extended education and transition through matching funds, available reimbursements, and other options.

Michigan collects data related to the post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. These one year follow-up data have been collected since 1990 and were gathered through interviews with former students. The employment data reported in this plan were collected from 1990-1996 and represent a total of 9,504 interviews.

Eighty-two percent of students with disabilities have worked since leaving school. Eighteen percent were never employed. Of the 82% who are working, the data indicate they have been on the job an average of 9.64 months out of the first post-school year. They work an average of 34.02 hours per week with an average pay of \$5.78 per hour.

In a 1991 study, 67.7% of students with disabilities who participated in the follow-along study (n = 564) participated in some type of postsecondary education or training. The majority of students with disabilities who graduated or completed high school went on to college (48.1%) or vocational/technical school (30.6%). The majority of students with disabilities in the study who dropped out of high school (n = 130) attended adult education (72.4%), presumably to attain their GED.

In addition to employment information, questions regarding the individual's general satisfaction and adjustment in the community are asked. Table 5 represents the data gathered.

Table 5: Post-School Outcomes Study

| Category | Option | Percent Endorsing Option |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Satisfaction with the special education services received | Very much | 56.1 |
| | Somewhat | 35.7 |
| | Not at all | 8.2 |
| General level of happiness the interviewee was experiencing | Yes, very | 56.4 |
| | More or less | 36.9 |
| | Not really | 4.9 |
| | No, I'm sad a lot | 1.8 |
| Individual lives with | Alone or with spouse | 8.5 |
| | Hired personal assistant | 3.1 |
| | Friends or other | 13.2 |
| | Parent or guardian | 69.9 |
| | Other relatives | 5.3 |
| Can cook own meals | Yes | 93.9 |
| | No | 6.1 |
| Who would contact a physician, if needed | Self | 71.8 |
| | Relative | 1.8 |
| | Friend, doctor | 1.1 |
| | Parent, guardian | 21.5 |
| | Spouse | 1.3 |
| | Other | 2.5 |
| Importance of community activities | Very | 32.7 |
| | Somewhat | 47.2 |
| | Not important | 20.1 |
| Registered to vote | Yes | 56.7 |
| | No | 42.5 |
| | Don't know | 0.8 |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

These data give us important information regarding the lives of students after they leave special education. Though only suggestive at this time, it appears that a sizable percentage of students (70%) live at home after leaving school. Many (47%) see little importance in community activities

and 42% do not vote. The need to carefully examine and strengthen the transition process is again suggested by these data. The collection of these data should be expanded and combined with postsecondary education data to serve as the basis for an ongoing longitudinal study.

Many participants in the Kalamazoo event noted that improvements have been made in access to postsecondary education, but that the faculty at colleges, universities and technical schools need assistance to appropriately accommodate students with disabilities. They also identified a need to increase the use of community-based instruction for students with disabilities in order to promote stronger linkages with community life.

Needs related to postsecondary education, employment and other post-school outcomes —

- Create a data system that allows for longitudinal follow-along of students with disabilities.
- Increase the percentage of students with disabilities participating in postsecondary education and training.
- Improve employment rates of students with disabilities.
- Support and improve transition services from school to work and to adult life roles.

These needs are supported by stakeholders who participated in the planning event in Kalamazoo. For fiscal year 1998-99 and at least through fiscal year 2000-01, improving transition services is a targeted priority in Michigan. To support this priority, a statewide transition service technical assistance project has been funded through grants awarded by the State Board of Education (\$500,000 in year 1); and, funding to intermediate education agencies to support capacity building and improved coordination of transition services has been provided (\$2,000,000 in year 1). A state level interagency policy group, the Transition Network Team, has been convened to address policy barriers at the state level.

These actions are examples of data driving strategic planning for targeted priorities. Evaluation of the impact on personnel development and student success will be reported as part of the strategic planning and improvement process. This element of Michigan's Plan for the Improvement of Student Performance will be integrated into the Michigan Model for the Improvement of Student Performance. This will initiate a cycle of systemic and strategic planning, evaluation, revision, and strategies.

Personnel Supply and Demand

State Board of Education Policy

- Strengthen teacher and administrator preparation programs

State Board of Education Priority

- Update and upgrade teacher and administrator preparation

State Board of Education Goals

- Coordinate periodic reviews of teacher preparation institutions through the Office of Professional Preparation Services to incorporate relevant elements of a restructured system of special education.
- Review/revise personnel preparation requirements to support education results for all students including students with disabilities.
- Respond to supply and demand needs in special education and to the growing need for models which respond to the increasing diversity of the student population.

In Michigan in 1997-98, special education personnel included 542 administrative staff, 11,455 classroom teachers, 3,697 teacher consultants, 3,190 paraprofessionals (e.g., instructional aides, physical or occupational therapy assistants), and 3,284 related service providers (e.g., physical and occupational therapists, nurses, school social workers).

Demand

School year 1997-1998 data indicate that there are 429 teachers working under temporary or emergency approval. In Michigan, teachers receiving temporary approval possess a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate with one area of endorsement, but lack full endorsement in the area of special education. School districts also report the number of funded positions they have been unable to fill. A review of existing data on temporary/emergency approvals (n=429) and vacant/funded positions (n=123) is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Fiscal Year 1997-98 Personnel

| Disability Category | Emergency/Temporary Approval | Vacant Funded | Currently Employed |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Visual Impairment | 0 | 0 | 67 |
| Trainable Mental Impairment | 4 | 0 | 640 |
| Hearing Impairment | 0 | 1 | 297 |
| Physical or Otherwise Health Impairment | 0 | 2 | 185 |
| Preprimary Impairment | 51 | 3 | 525 |
| Severe Mental Impairment | 4 | 3 | 213 |
| Severe Multiple Impairment | 2 | 4 | 234 |
| Autistic Impairment | 47 | 6 | 231 |
| Resource Room | 59 | 16 | 3,480 |
| Educable Mental Impairment | 30 | 18 | 1,783 |
| Emotional Impairment | 73 | 23 | 1,951 |
| Learning Disability | 159 | 30 | 2,189 |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

Another study, conducted in the spring of 1998 with directors of special education services across Michigan, confirms the data on vacant funded positions.

With respect to service personnel, the field has consistently expressed concerns regarding shortages in speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and orientation and mobility specialists.

The shortage of speech-language pathologists has been brought to the attention of the State Board of Education. Twenty of 57 ISDs requested a waiver to the Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education which require speech and language pathologists to hold a teaching certificate. Thirty-three full year special permits were issued for the 1997-1998 school year. The permits allow the district to employ a speech and language pathologist who has no teaching certificate for up to one school year. Such persons must hold a master's degree in speech and language pathology and may provide speech and language services to students. They may not be placed in a teaching assignment such as a classroom for students with speech and language impairments. The difficulty with using the "full-year permit" procedure is that the school district must search for a fully certified teacher of students with speech and language impairment, prior to renewal of the permit. If the district is unable to locate and hire a fully-certified teacher of students with speech and language impairment, the district may apply for renewal of the full-year permit, only if the candidate has completed at least 6 semester hours toward the teaching certificate. Persons with master's degrees in speech and language pathology have employment opportunities in the private sector. These conditions deter candidates from accepting employment under the full-year permit.

Data are needed to document the extent of shortages in psychologists and orientation and mobility specialists.

Supply

Michigan is one of the few states to collect supply data through its institutions of higher education (IHE). The seventh annual survey was completed in 1997-1998 and sent to all private and public universities and colleges in Michigan that prepare special education personnel (n=15). University students in special education programs were asked to complete the survey. Five programs, Eastern Michigan University, Wayne State University, Michigan State University, Central Michigan University, and Grand Valley State University, accounted for 74% of the survey respondents. A total of 724 graduate and undergraduate students completed the survey (Table 7).

The vast majority of students responding to the survey (65.7%) wished to work with elementary age children. Only 8.4% and 8.0%, respectively, wished to work with middle or high school level students. These data support field comment that has consistently noted the difficulty in recruiting special education teaching personnel for older students. Seventy-seven percent of the surveyed students plan to work in Michigan.

The survey also asked students to identify the area(s) in which they were currently seeking endorsement.

Table 7: Endorsements Sought in Fiscal Year 1997-98

| Disability Category | Graduate Students | Undergraduate Students |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Emotional Impairment | 31 | 202 |
| Mental Impairment | 76 | 193 |
| Learning Disability | 76 | 83 |
| Early Childhood | 8 | 51 |
| Hearing Impairment | 7 | 38 |
| Autistic Impairment | 1 | 11 |
| Visual Impairment | 6 | 10 |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

Underrepresented Personnel in the Special Education Field

Gender and ethnic information is also gathered on the IHE student survey. Not surprisingly, the majority of those studying special education were female. This is the reverse of the Michigan population of students with disabilities in which 67.5% are male.

The ethnic distribution of the IHE students reveals a continuing problem in recruiting university students from underrepresented populations into the field of special education and mirrors the composition of the current special education work force (Table 8). Comparisons with both the special education student population and the total student population can also be made.

Table 8: Racial/Ethnic Distribution in Special Education in Michigan

| Ethnic Group | Percent of IHE Students Responding to Survey | Percent of Current Special Education Teacher Population | Percent of Special Education Student Population | Percent of Total Student Population |
|---------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Caucasian | 68.5 | 81.3 | 77.1 | 76.07 |
| African American | 7.2 | 9.9 | 17.9 | 18.39 |
| Multi-ethnic | 3.3 | 4.4 | No data | No data |
| Native American | 1.2 | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.04 |
| Hispanic | 0.8 | 1.1 | 2.5 | 2.87 |
| Asian | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 1.63 |
| Middle Eastern | 0.6 | 1.1 | No data | No data |

Source: Michigan Department of Education

Data were not available regarding the representation of persons with disabilities in teacher preparation programs or the current teacher population. However, it is suspected that underrepresentation is present.

Needs related to personnel supply and demand —

- Collect and analyze data to document the extent of shortages in orientation and mobility specialists, psychologists, and secondary education personnel.
- Increase the number of fully qualified teachers of special education.
- Resolve the identified unmet need for speech and language services.
- Increase underrepresented populations in special education teacher preparation programs; improve recruitment of teachers from underrepresented groups.
- Collect and summarize data on the numbers of persons with disabilities entering into, or currently working in, the special education field.

Stakeholders at the Kalamazoo event articulated inequities in access to services. Shortages in personnel exacerbate such inequities.

Institutions of Higher Education Teacher Training Coordination

State Board of Education Policy

- Strengthen teacher and administrator preparation programs

State Board of Education Priority

- Update and upgrade teacher and administrator preparation

State Board of Education Goals

- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate professional development resources which utilize research-based and proven curricular models and instructional strategies.
- Establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities.
- Identify, coordinate, and disseminate information and training on functional accommodations for students with disabilities to increase participation in accelerated courses and advanced learning opportunities.

In the mid-1980s, in response to newly adopted special education rules and regulations, the Institutions of Higher Education/Special Education Committee (IHE/SE) was created to provide a uniform process and structure whereby all special education personnel preparation programs would be proposed, reviewed, and processed. The IHE/SE included representation from all current or anticipated personnel preparation programs including all of the liberal arts colleges, as well as the larger state colleges and universities. The IHE/SE functions as an advisory body to the Director of the OSE/EIS.

Over the years, the formal and/or informal functions of the IHE/SE have included:

- Provide a forum for communication and coordination among the special education personnel preparation programs in Michigan.
- Provide college and university faculty/programs with current information related to special education from federal and state sources.
- Advise the OSE/EIS Director regarding personnel preparation issues or concerns and respond to important developments in special education.
- Initiate research/scholarship programs and promote collaboration among constituent personnel preparation programs.

As far as can be determined, this IHE/SE is unique. Michigan has unique collegial relationships among special education personnel preparation programs and with the Department of Education. Within the IHE/SE, small training programs/institutions are equal partners with "big" programs/institutions.

The IHE/SE will address the following goals in collaboration with the OSE/EIS. These goals have been adopted by the State Board of Education.

1. Provide information and training to college and university faculty on the restructuring of the special education system.
2. Coordinate periodic reviews of teacher preparation institutions through Michigan's Office of Personnel Preparation Services to incorporate relevant elements of a restructured system of special education.
3. Support model sites for teacher training that provide preservice teachers enhanced onsite learning opportunities.
4. Review/revise personnel preparation requirements to support educational results for all students including students with disabilities.
5. Respond to supply and demand needs in special education and to the growing needs for models which respond to the increasing diversity of the student population.

Improving teacher preparation at institutions of higher education was discussed by the participants at the Kalamazoo event. They felt that instituting course work on collaboration and teaming and developing demonstration sites for student teachers were priorities in this area.

Needs related to IHE/SE teacher training coordination —

- Improve coordination among IHEs to address low-incidence needs.
- Recommend effective methods to standardize programs, criteria, and standards among the various IHE sites.
- Improve communication linkages between general and special education teacher preparation faculty at the institution level and at the state level.
- Increase coordination for continuing education and non-endorsement granting degree programs.
- Develop a mechanism for designing short or long term training programs that respond to real or anticipated needs/shortages in specific areas (e.g., autism, traumatic brain injury, etc.).
- Develop a transition plan for Michigan's teaching force and personnel preparation leadership which reflects demographic predictions: many experienced teachers and leaders are expected to retire in the next 3 to 5 years.
- Include IHE faculty in school improvement, inservice education, and collaboration as full partners both in receiving information and in adjusting their programs to address data-based practices that improve student performance.
- Infuse IDEA 97 content and concepts uniformly in all general education and special education personnel preparation programs.

Michigan has been supporting collaborative sites of practice and inquiry through grants awarded by the State Board of Education. At these sites, higher education faculty and local public schools collaborate in the provision of personnel preparation. Undergraduate and graduate students in general education/special education receive much of their preparation at local public schools. The interaction among higher education faculty, school district staff, and students (both school-age and college) supports multiple types of learning and achievement.

Major Findings of the Secretary's Most Recent Review of State Compliance

State Board of Education Policy

- Streamline reporting and focus on performance monitoring

State Board of Education Priorities

- Hold students, schools, and districts accountable for improving student achievement

State Board of Education Goals

- Implement a system of quality assurance which coordinates required compliance, monitoring, and systemic improvement planning.
- Develop district and building data profiles on special education students and system indicators.
- Use the data profiles as an accountability measure and to generate local improvement plans.
- Identify and provide technical assistance resources to schools and districts which have significant student and systemic needs, as identified by the district data profiles and improvement plans.

Federal Monitoring

The State of Michigan was last monitored by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in 1993. At that time, Michigan was cited for its difficulty with meeting the 30 day initial evaluations and 3 year reevaluation time lines. Time lines on evaluations continue to be a problem in some districts. This monitoring citation supports the field report of insufficient supply of school psychologists.

Michigan was also cited for its time lines related to complaints and due process. Michigan continues its efforts to reduce time lines to investigate complaints and resolve due process hearings. However, resolution of complaints and hearings is not yet timely. The OSE/EIS is developing a new model for resolving complaints and hearings to address this issue.

The federal monitoring of the Michigan School for the Blind and Michigan School for the Deaf also revealed areas of concern to OSEP. Both state schools were monitored in the 1996-97 school year. Findings indicated a need for both schools to establish written policies and procedures in the areas of: (1) procedural safeguards, (2) referral procedures and diagnostic systems, (3) IEP Team meeting procedures, (4) least restrictive environment, (5) programs and services, and (6) administration. Such written policies and procedures have been drafted with the assistance of Department staff, but not finalized. Once the written policies are finalized, there will be a need to provide training to each state school's staff and to disseminate the new procedures to LEAs and ISDs.

State Monitoring

The OSE/EIS conducts a triennial monitoring of special education programs and services provided by all ISDs, LEAs, public school academies (PSAs), and state agencies utilizing the State Board of Education approved standards for special education.

Individualized education programs of students selected on a random basis in each ISD and its constituent LEAs and PSAs are monitored for compliance to standards and implementation of instruction. State agencies providing special education programs and services are also monitored.

The special education forms which document procedures are reviewed using the State Board of Education approved forms review standards. A director's interview, utilizing the State Board of Education approved administrative interview format, is held with each ISD or state agency special education director or administrative designee. The certifications of special education personnel and the approvals of special education programs are also reviewed.

The ISD is responsible for monitoring each constituent LEA and PSA during the years in which they are not monitored by the OSE/EIS. The OSE/EIS reviews the ISD monitoring during its triennial monitoring visit. State agencies are also responsible for monitoring their special education programs in the same manner.

The most prevalent statewide standard violation identified has been addressing the "present levels of educational performance" of the student by the IEP Team. The IEP Teams have had difficulty linking present level of performance to IEP goals, curriculum selection, and instructional strategies. Each ISD has assured the MDE that a memorandum has been sent to each teacher regarding the corrective action process and has held inservice education sessions to address compliance requirements of linking the identified deficits to special education goals and short-term objectives in the student's IEP by the IEP Team. The ISDs, for which the present level of educational performance standard persists in noncompliance status, identified the following as factors contributing to the non-compliance status:

1. Staff turnover.
2. Lack of sustained teacher support systems.

Analysis of the Complaint Database

Between July 1987 and October 1995, OSE/EIS has kept a database of its special education complaint cases. During that time, 1,442 cases were filed, approximately 166 per year. Of these, three quarters were settled without a state level investigation; the remainder used the state-level investigation procedure.

Who files complaints?

Parents file nearly three quarters of all complaints; 16% of all complaints include a legal advocate. Six percent are brought by school employees with another 6% by parent groups, parent advisory committees, unions, or other involved parties. Nearly 80% of the cases involve only one student.

What type of cases are there?

Cases range across all grade levels from preprimary through postsecondary. The vast majority of cases (nearly 75%) are K-12. Most cases involve general school programs; about 15% are LEA center-based programs, ISD programs, or special facilities. All categories are represented, with learning disability and emotional impairment having the highest percentages (18% and 15%, respectively). All program service types are present, with resource, support service, and emotional impairment programs totaling nearly half of the cases.

Over 20% fall under provisions of state law PA 451 while another 5% are covered by the IDEA. Less than 2% of the total are covered by FERPA, Section 504, State or ISD plans, OSE/EIS interpretations, and miscellaneous laws. The other 73% of the cases did not list governing laws.

What issues are raised?

Just over 25% of the cases list recognized issues, not all of which are found to be valid. If these cases are a representative sample, the top issues are, in order of decreasing frequency:

- IEP implementation not as agreed to
- IEP goals and objectives
- IEP Team delayed
- Independent educational evaluations
- Notice provisions
- IEP Team participants
- Due process rights, failure to inform
- Referral time lines
- IEP content
- Records, access
- Suspension from school

Who investigates the complaints?

Nearly 90% of the cases are opened at the ISD level. Of these cases, only 35% are not resolved; 25% are resolved with a state level investigation; and 10% are resolved elsewhere (withdrawn, U.S. Department of Education, etc.). In 82% of the cases, no other agencies are involved. The Office of Civil Rights is involved in 5%, while the U.S. Department of Education participates in 2%.

Activities for Due Process Hearings

The following information was gleaned from the current database and is representative for only the school years 1991-92 through 1996-97.

There were 395 hearings requested during the six year period being reported. Of these, 36.2% were dismissed at the request of one of the two parties and 7.1% were withdrawn prior to hearing officer involvement at the request of one of the two parties involved. Ten percent of the hearings were settled by mutual agreement, while 12% were left pending at the end of one of the six years.

In Michigan, mediation is defined as a process in which two or more people involved in a dispute meet in an informal, confidential setting and, with the help of trained mediators, work out a solution to their problem. Mediation is a voluntary process which must be entered into by the agreement of both parties and may not be used to delay the hearing process. Mediation may be concluded at any time by either party. Of the 395 hearings requested, mediation was discussed at 10% of them. Of the 39 hearings where mediation was discussed, 0.01% were considered partially successful, 0.03% tried mediation and considered the process a failure, and 6.1% rejected mediation by one or both parties.

Needs related to monitoring and compliance —

- Increase the active participation of parents in the IEP process.
- Provide training and support to educators regarding the identification and documentation of "present level of performance" on students' IEPs.
- Improve the IEP content to demonstrate linkages between assessment results, present level of performance, IEP goals, curriculum selection, and instructional strategies.

- Provide training and support to families to improve their participation in the IEP process and procedural safeguards.
- Improve adherence to compliance and hearings time lines.

The improvement of the IEP process received considerable attention at the Kalamazoo event. Participants recommended the development of materials for parents that fully explain the IEP process in parent-friendly language and give information on parent-to-parent support. They also recommended the use of Person Centered Plans or McGill Action Plans (MAPS) as pre-IEP tools to improve the process and content of IEPs. Participants also stressed the need to strengthen the relationships between school personnel and parents throughout the IEP process.

Partnerships and Agreements

The Department's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) must work in partnership with others in order to improve the performance of students with disabilities. Partners have been engaged in the state improvement planning process and have assisted the state in developing the direction of Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities. The Department has entered into partnership agreements with many stakeholder groups. The partnership agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, describes the nature and scope of the partners' participation in Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIP) and Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIG).

Michigan's SIG establishes a systemic improvement model consisting of four centers or hubs that coordinate the functions for comprehensive personnel development. These hubs, described in depth in the "Systemic Improvement Activities" section of the SIP, will be administered by four intermediate school districts:

Washtenaw Intermediate School District — Hub I
Eaton Intermediate School District — Hub II
Marquette-Alger Intermediate School District — Hub III
Livingston Educational Service Agency — Hub IV

The hubs are developed to reduce the duplication of effort among personnel development activities and initiatives supported through State Board of Education funding. The SIG seeks to increase the effectiveness of these programs and to provide sustained learning opportunities to impact student performance. The hubs also provide a structure that can be utilized by other stakeholders to coordinate sustained learning activities.

Stakeholder agencies, organizations, and statewide projects have agreed to collaborate with the hubs and to utilize them as appropriate. The partners in Michigan's SIP and Michigan's SIG are:

ACCESS Project
Autism Society of Michigan
Capacity Building Grants
Center for Educational Networking Project
Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education
Collaborative Sites of Practice and Inquiry
Comprehensive Parent Services Project
Comprehensive System for Personnel Development
Department of Corrections
Department of Community Health
Developmental Disabilities Institute, Wayne State University
Dispute Resolution Project
Family Independence Agency
Family Information Exchange
Great Lakes Regional Resource Center
Institutions of Higher Education/Special Education Committee
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Michigan Alliance of School Physical and Occupational Therapists
Michigan Association for Children with Emotional Disorders
Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
Michigan Association of Intermediate Special Education Administrators
Michigan Association of Learning Disabilities Educators
Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools
Michigan Association of Public School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Boards
Michigan Association of School Psychologists
Michigan Association of School Social Workers
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
Michigan Association of Teachers of Emotionally Disturbed Children
Michigan Association of Transition Services Personnel
Michigan Commission for the Blind
Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns
Michigan Congress of Parents, Teachers, and Students
Michigan Council for Exceptional Children — Technology and Media Division, Division on
Mental Retardation, Division for Early Childhood
Michigan Council for Independent Living
Michigan Dean's Council
Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council
Michigan Education Association
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan Federation Chapters of the Council for Exceptional Children
Michigan Federation of Teachers
Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services, Inc.
Michigan Reading Association
Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Michigan's Assistive Technology Resources
Middle Cities Education Association
Monitoring and Quality Assurance Review
Parent Leadership Program
Performance Standards for Transition and Co-Teaching
Special Education Supervisors of Michigan
Special Needs Program at Michigan School for the Blind
State Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers
Technology, Materials and Training for Instruction Grant
The Arc Michigan
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metro Detroit, Inc.

Using the hub model for systemic improvement, the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services will adjust its approach to impacting student performance over the next five years. The implementation of a function-based approach has significant implications for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of personnel development activities and school improvement with which Michigan special education stakeholders responded to the educational needs of Michigan's students with disabilities. By adopting this approach, training and development of effective practices can proceed in a coordinated and effective manner.

Systemic Improvement Activities

The system improvement challenge facing Michigan is complex; it requires that diverse parties collaborate in a broad-based and comprehensive process. The following is the basic systemic improvement design for ensuring that improving student performance is at the center of all personnel development activities and model project development. This systemic framework, Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIG), will move us away from disparate activities and into an integrated and systematic approach founded on sound data analysis, leading to sustained learning in critical areas, and providing a framework for developing local capacity to improve student performance in a dynamic and flexible manner.

The SIG creates a superstructure of collaborative coordination in which four primary functions of personnel development support can occur. Overseen by a Partnership Team and the directors of each of the four hubs, an unprecedented coordination of efforts will occur. The Partnership Team will include parents, practitioners, and administrators representing the Special Education Advisory Committee, the State Interagency Coordinating Council, and the directors of those state-initiated projects who have agreed to participate in the SIG. The following structure for system improvement will be instituted:

Hub I — Information Development. The first hub in the model will be initiated for the purpose of identifying and/or developing data-based information about promising practices, prioritizing needs, and determining the effectiveness of training and practice in Michigan. This hub will serve as the primary vehicle for evaluating effective practices and developing new information, where needed, to guide districts in their efforts to improve student performance. It will also serve as the primary means to ensure that improving student performance drives the rest of the system.

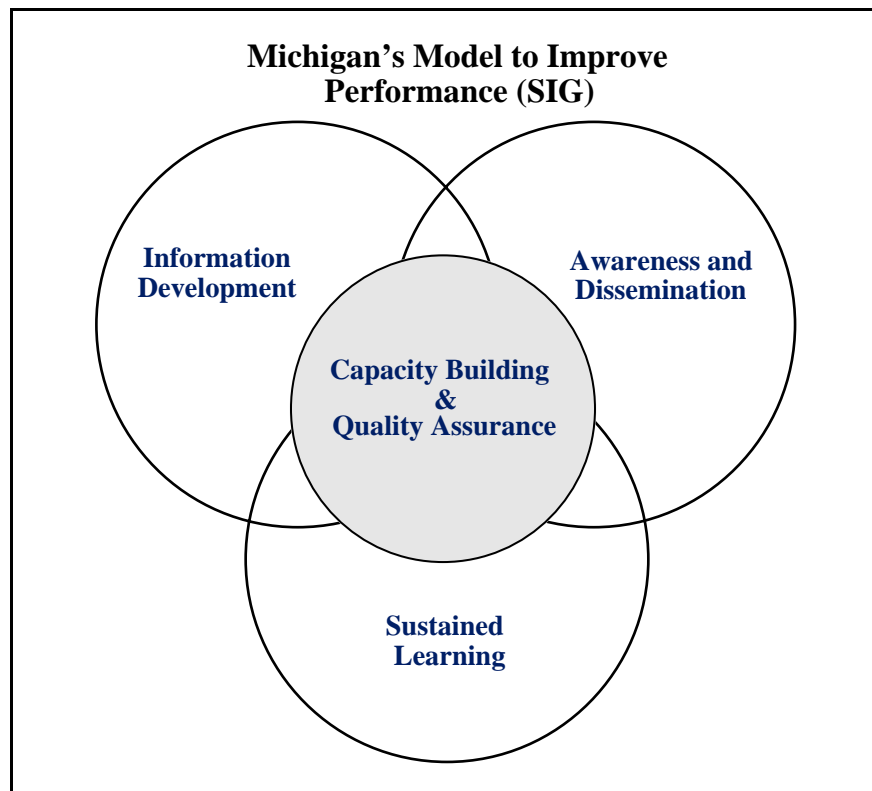
Hub II — Awareness and Dissemination. The second hub in the model will be initiated to prepare and ensure the effective dissemination of information about the many topical issues of importance to the education community regarding effective education of individuals with disabilities. This hub will focus on synthesizing, coordinating, and disseminating information at the awareness level, and will provide regular updates to the field regarding practices that have been found to be effective, model projects, and resources available to support local capacity building. This hub will work in concert with the first hub to ensure that information that has been developed on the subject of effective practices and resources gets distributed to all stakeholders concerned with the education of students with disabilities (including parents, special educators, general educators, administrators, institutions of higher education, and all agencies and organizations with an interest in improving education for persons with disabilities).

Hub III — Sustained Learning. The third hub in this model will focus specifically on fostering sustained learning activities within Michigan to promote the skills practitioners need to implement innovative and effective practices. This hub will ensure the availability of training that promotes the adoption of effective practices and the sustained learning and resources necessary for true skill development and utilization within the schools. Working in close collaboration with the research and evaluation activities of Hub I, and in collaboration with institutions of higher education, this hub will promote long-term improvement in the quality of services for students with disabilities at the local site where instruction is occurring.

Hub IV — Capacity Building and Quality Assurance. The fourth hub will ensure collaboration across disciplinary lines, to directly support local capacity building, and to ensure

that the activities undertaken within the system are high in quality. This hub will synthesize the various mandates and policies of all agencies and organizations impacting the education of students with disabilities, and recommend collaborations that will reduce redundancies, improve services available for all students, and increase the capacities for local improvement processes. This hub will also ensure that the products and services available will be translated into specific action steps that can be implemented locally, and provide technical assistance to districts carrying out their own system improvement activities.

Historically, personnel development activities of the state have been driven by topic areas thought to be important at the time. Often, these topics were transient in nature, and tended to focus on specifically targeted, but isolated teaching issues and practices. Furthermore, training most often occurred at the awareness level, conveying new information and suggested approaches, but leaving the implementation of new approaches entirely up to the trainees with little or no follow-up support. The result has been the accretion of a sizeable number of discrete, independent efforts directed at narrowly defined areas of interest. Nearly all these efforts, while producing worthy resources, have duplicated each other in many ways now seen as inefficient and expensive. By duplicating the functions necessary to provide quality support for teachers, parents, and other personnel, each topical project expends a significant portion of its funding on potentially redundant activities, at the expense of linking results to student performance and establishing more than cursory awareness of the topic itself. For example, most such efforts develop their own awareness materials, their own dissemination methods and lists, their own training, and conduct their own evaluations. Also, few have yet been able to establish a clear link between their efforts and improvement in student performance.



Michigan's Model to Improve Performance:
The design for improving personnel development

Using the model thus created, the OSE/EIS, over a five year period, will incrementally utilize these hubs for improving the delivery of services to students. By adopting the functional approach represented in this plan, personnel development can proceed in a coordinated and systematic manner, regardless of which critical issues are prioritized over time. The challenge in this state improvement project is to implement a system of hubs that will focus specifically on the major functions associated with effective training and support, so that a variety of topics and issues can be effectively addressed within the system, with minimal redundancy.

Amount and Nature of Funds from Other Sources (including under Part B) that will be Committed to Systemic-Improvement Activities

Up to 20% of the total IDEA Part B and Preschool funds may be used for special projects that address statewide priorities and needs. In Michigan, the funds for these special statewide projects are referred to as state initiated projects. State initiated project funds provide direct programs/services or other support services that improve the opportunities, education, and achievement of students with disabilities. Direct programs/services are supported with grants to school districts/agencies for the purpose of working directly with students with disabilities. Support services are provided through projects that concentrate on research, evaluation, and training.

The following state initiated projects utilize Part B funds and engage in activities that support the systemic improvement within Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities. Not all the activities performed by the projects currently align with the model. Consequently, the project budgets support the model partially, not completely. Michigan intends to completely align its state initiated projects with the state improvement plan over the five year SIG grant period. As a result, some projects will be phased out if the activities do not support targeted priorities, as determined through the strategic planning process. At the end of the grant period, the functional model of the SIG will be sustained within the regular budget and operations of OSE/EIS and the Department.

Memoranda of Understanding were signed by the following state initiated projects that have agreed to utilize the improvement model structure to enhance the functions of their projects:

ACCESS Project — Provides technical support and assistance in the collection and reporting of Special Education and Early Intervention Central Registry and compliance data as required under the IDEA. The ACCESS Project budget for FY 1998-99 is \$180,000. This will interface with Hub I.

Center for Educational Networking (CEN) — Provides consumers and providers of special education information about special education activities, issues, and technology updates by way of a monthly newsletter, the "CEN Newslines." The CEN Project budget for FY 1998-99 is \$297,500. This will interface with Hub II.

Collaborative Sites of Practice and Inquiry — Promotes a more unified educational system (general education/special education) through innovative teacher preparation practices by initiating or enhancing a collaborative site(s) where promising practices in teaching, learning, and teacher education are developed and studied. Each site will expand opportunities for preservice teachers to interact with professionals in the field as part of a collaborative effort between their institution(s) of higher education and local education agency(s). The Collaborative Sites of Practice and Inquiry budget for FY 1998-99 is \$225,000. This will interface with Hubs I, II, and III.

Comprehensive Parent Services System — Implements a comprehensive services system for parents of students with disabilities throughout Michigan. This system provides information to parents on rights and responsibilities under IDEA; access to national information on disabilities, education and intervention strategies; advocacy training; and parent-to-parent training and support. In addition the System coordinates information, awareness and dissemination level activities across a broad array of parent organizations. Both of Michigan's Parent Training and Information Centers (federally funded) are part of this system. The Comprehensive Parent Services System budget for FY 1998-99 is \$550,000. This system will interface with Hubs I, II, III and IV.

Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) — Provides professional development activities initiated directly by the OSE/EIS on a regional basis. The CSPD activities are based upon statewide needs assessment, compliance and monitoring reports, consumer and provider field requests, input of OSE/EIS staff, and legal and procedural improvements affecting the delivery of educational services to students with disabilities in Michigan. The Comprehensive System for Personnel Development budget for FY 1998-99 is \$605,000. This will interface with Hubs II and III.

Co-Teaching — Enhances planning for individual students and district school improvement efforts by providing instructional support specific to co-teaching. Funds provide training to general and special education personnel on the use of team/co-teaching materials, techniques, and strategies. The Co-Teaching budget for FY 1998-99 is \$80,000. This will interface with Hubs III and IV.

Dispute Resolution Project — Uses mediation as an alternative form of resolving educational disputes and program complaints. Grant funds will be used to support the maintenance of a cadre of mediation officers. Also, funds will provide skill training to assist parents of students with disabilities and school districts to deal more positively with disputes regarding the education of students with disabilities. The Dispute Resolution Project budget for FY 1998-99 is \$108,000. This will interface with Hubs II, III, and IV.

Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource — Provides information regarding the latest technologies to educators and those serving students with disabilities. Additionally, this project provides Braille and large print services to all Michigan schools. The training and services component focuses on provision of product information and linkages among stakeholders, individual student diagnostic assessments, evaluation of equipment for individuals with disabilities, and recommendations to modify tools for the work environment of individuals with disabilities. Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource budget for FY 1998-99 is \$1,000,000. This will interface with Hubs I and II.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance Review — Supports the development of a quality assurance review model for special education, including elements of required monitoring of special education programs and services. The Monitoring and Quality Assurance Review budget for FY 1998-99 is \$260,000. This will interface with Hubs I and IV.

Special Needs Program at Michigan School for the Blind — Provides diagnostic evaluations of students with visual impairments for school districts as well as serves as a clearinghouse for information on programming, teaching techniques, and adaptive equipment. The Special Needs Program at Michigan School for the Blind budget for FY 1998-99 is \$400,000. This will interface with Hubs II and IV.

Technical Assistance for Collaborative Transition Services — Provides statewide technical assistance through an interagency team to improve the coordination of education, employment training, and adult life skills. The technical assistance team is made up of representatives from Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Jobs Commission, the Department of Community Health, and the Family Independence Agency. The Technical Assistance for Collaborative Transition Services budget for 1998-99 is \$500,000. This will interface with Hubs II and IV.

Grants to intermediate and local education agencies to facilitate and support improved student performance include:

Capacity Building Grants — Provides for direct services and systematic improvement to improve results for students with disabilities. The Capacity Building Grants budget for FY 1998-99 is \$5,239,713. This will interface with Hubs II and IV.

Technology, Materials, and Training for Instruction Grant — Funds are distributed in proportion to special education student count to 22 intermediate school districts who serve as Regional Centers for the purpose of purchasing technology, providing professional development to strengthen instructional skills, and obtaining materials to supplement special education curriculum and resources. This grant is a direct service to special education professionals and students with disabilities. Technology, Materials, and Training for Instruction Grant budget for FY 1998-99 is \$450,000. This will interface with Hubs II and III.

Transition Services Grants — Provides resources to ISDs to meet the challenge of providing transition services to students with disabilities beginning at age 14. The grants support the development of productive partnerships with agencies and employers and the implementation of transition services. The Grants for Transition Services budget for FY 1998-99 is \$2,010,000. This will interface with Hubs II and IV.

The Michigan Department of Education receives the following federal funds that can be used, in part, to support systemic improvement activities in the model:

- Title I funds for professional development
- Title II Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Grants
- Title III, Goals 2000 Grant Program
- Title VI funds for support of professional development activities

Michigan Department of Education resources include:

Career and Technical Education - Supported through state and federal funds, including the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. Michigan's goals for career and technical education, as adopted by the State Board of Education, were designed to meet the needs of providing access and services to all persons, while targeting special populations, and to provide for the improvement of the quality of career and technical education programs. These goals were developed into specific activities in the Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education.

The relationship between the Statewide Strategic Plan for Career and Technical Education, the Carl D. Perkins federal legislation, and the identification of outcome measures for all K-12 education has provided the basis for goals, objectives, and activities in Michigan.

The 1997-98 Annual Performance Report identifies a full-service model of education which

supports the provision of aids and services necessary to assure access and progress for students with disabilities. Funding provides supports to both secondary and postsecondary agencies. Current needs, among others and as identified in the Report include: the need for ongoing staff development; and, the need for continued support to provide opportunities for all students.

Michigan has 53 regional Career Education Planning Districts. Career guidance and counseling services are accessible in high school, area career centers, career academies, and in middle, junior, and upper elementary schools. Connections with School-to-Work, Gender Equity, and Tech Prep programs have been established by career guidance and counseling staff.

The Michigan Occupations Information System (MOIS) is a career information delivery system that is jointly sponsored by the Michigan Jobs Commission and the Michigan Department of Education. MOIS is a basic source of information for career awareness/exploration activities in schools and career development activities. Juvenile detention centers are now also connected to MOIS. In 1996-97, over 1,500 user sites were active.

Goals 2000 - Title III of Goals 2000, Educate America Act of 1994, supports the implementation of the Michigan Curriculum Framework. FY 98-99 funding (\$16.7 million) is provided directly to local education agencies and public school academies (charter schools) for systemic improvement, including the implementation of the Framework. This year, a focus on upgrading teachers' knowledge of content areas and target populations, including students with disabilities, has been emphasized. At this time, several intermediate and local education agencies are developing extensions of the Framework to address standards and benchmarks for students with severe cognitive disabilities. Goals 2000 also supports focused efforts on improvement of reading success in early elementary grades and strategic school improvement planning.

Michigan Curriculum Framework - Academic Core Curriculum Content Standards and accompanying Benchmarks for Model Content Standards are in place in Michigan. The Framework also includes a planning guide and sections that provide guidelines for assessment and professional development. For consistency across subject areas, the Framework is organized around a common 3-tier system. Tier 1 is the Framework: standards and benchmarks for all subjects and supporting materials. Tier 2 includes tool kits addressing crosscutting themes, including the Equity Tool Kit. Tier 3 is a set of resources such as guidelines, planning and teaching, assessment, and professional development. Implementation of the Framework is supported by Goals 2000 funds.

Michigan Consolidated Application - In March 1995, the U.S. Department of Education Secretary Richard W. Riley mailed documents to all superintendents describing some of the major legislative provisions that support greater flexibility in education reform efforts. Section 14305 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, allows districts to seek funds from its state educational agency under a number of federal programs on the basis of a consolidated local plan or application.

In Michigan, districts are offered an opportunity to submit a consolidated application. The purpose of the consolidated application is to reduce fragmentation, duplication, and improve coordination of services across educational programs to improve teaching and learning. In addition, the consolidated application increases collaboration between the funding and program source to support the alignment of the program goals to the district's school improvement plan.

Currently, Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C (Education of Migratory Children); Title I, Part D

(Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or at Risk of Dropping Out); Title II, Part B (Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program); Title VI (Innovative Education Program Strategies); Section 41 (Bilingual Education - State Aid Act); and Section 57.3 (Gifted and Talented - State Aid Act) are included in the Michigan Consolidated Application form.

Districts are encouraged to include the following programs in their consolidated planning to build further collaborative school improvement plans, but funding will be based on separate applications: (1) Title II, Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act; (2) Title III of P.L. 102-103, Adult Education Programs; (3) Title IV, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities; and (4) P.L. 103-239, School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994.

Michigan Professional Development Standards - In 1995, the State Board of Education adopted Professional Development Definition and Standards. The Standards acknowledge, through their structure, that professional development must have content, context, and process, and be based on sustained learning. Principles reflected in these standards include "high standards; all students; capacity of all members; learning community; and lifelong learning." The standards are intended to be guidelines for local and intermediate districts, academies, universities, and others who plan and conduct professional development activities. The standards are a framework for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of ongoing and future programming. Eisenhower and other state funding sources are tied to these standards.

Strategies

Changing State Policies and Procedures to Address Systemic Barriers

Substantial revision to the special education rules has been initiated in light of Task Force recommendations, IDEA 97, and Michigan Department of Education restructuring. The revisions are designed to accomplish the following:

1. Insert federal language/standards where such standards exist.
2. Incorporate state standards where the federal statute directs states to create standards.
3. Maintain all protections and rights for students with disabilities while incorporating flexibility in program design and use of resources.
4. Reflect principles of education reform that support improved student achievement, family involvement, and accountability.

These revisions support a system that: (1) is user friendly, (2) enables rather than constrains, and (3) yields positive results for all students. The State Board of Education has approved goals (December 1997 and June 1998) for special education to guide the systemic reform.

Michigan is studying systemic improvement in its funding provisions. The IDEA 97 presents new opportunities for the flexible use of funds for students with disabilities. Michigan's State School Aid Act does not currently reflect these improvements. A cost analysis will be implemented to help the Michigan Department of Education recommend appropriate revisions to the State School Aid Act so that the flexible funding provisions of IDEA 97 can be met.

Holding LEAs and Schools Accountable for the Educational Progress of Students with Disabilities

As Michigan moves forward with the revisions to the special education rules, elements of program and services design shift to the intermediate school districts. This shift provides flexibility to local and intermediate school districts and simultaneously generates concerns regarding standards and accountability.

Quality assurance and monitoring

A stakeholder-based team has been established to design a quality assurance process that integrates the required special education monitoring and compliance activities into systemic improvement planning which aligns with school and district-based planning. Great Lakes Regional Resource Center has provided technical assistance to this team, and alignment with the newly designed OSEP model of quality assurance is a priority. The goal of the quality assurance process is to provide public school academies, LEAs, and ISDs with student performance data and to institute a process that examines those data in light of parent, student, teacher, administrator, and community satisfaction measures to create local improvement plans directed at student performance. Local improvement plans will feed into local and district-wide school improvement plans and the state improvement plan.

As an interim measure, current compliance and monitoring activities have been updated to assure compliance with IDEA 97. Intermediate school district plans have also undergone substantial revision to align with IDEA 97.

Accountability for performance

Ensuring the inclusion of students with disabilities in the accountability systems in place for all students is another priority. Several strategies will be implemented to improve the participation rate of students with disabilities in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) including: (1) raising awareness of the MEAP among special educators and parents of students with disabilities, (2) raising the awareness of educators and parents that students with disabilities are expected to participate in the MEAP to the extent appropriate for each individual student, (3) working with educators to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, and (4) providing training in the use of appropriate supports and accommodations.

The performance of students with disabilities on the MEAP is not as high as the performance of students in general education. There is a need to improve the performance of students on the statewide assessment. Training will be provided to general and special educators, administrators, and parents regarding: (1) the appropriate use of accommodations, and (2) increasing access to the general curriculum.

Alternate assessment

An alternate assessment, for students unable to take the MEAP, must be developed so that Michigan can have complete data on performance levels of all students. Michigan has initiated the Alternate Assessment Project to begin development of an alternate assessment for students receiving special education services for whom the MEAP assessments or district-wide assessments of student achievement are not appropriate. The design of the alternate assessment has begun; it will be reviewed by the field, piloted, and revised as necessary over the next year and a half.

Providing Technical Assistance to Local Educational Agencies and Public School Academies to Improve Results for Students with Disabilities

Hub IV, the Center for Capacity Building and Quality Assurance, will undertake responsibility for technical assistance to local education agencies. This will ensure collaboration across disciplinary lines, directly support local capacity building, and ensure that the activities undertaken within the system are of a high quality. Over the next year, Hub IV will synthesize the various mandates and policies of all agencies and organizations impacting the education of students with disabilities, recommend collaborations that will reduce redundancies, and increase the capacities for local coordination with the other three hubs. Technical assistance will be provided to local education agencies regarding the interpretation and use of student performance data for local planning.

Within the first five years of this project, Hub IV will coordinate the technical assistance activities of state initiated projects, facilitate the development of local improvement plans, and evaluate the OSE/EIS Quality Assurance Model.

Addressing Identified Needs for Inservice and Preservice Preparation

Needs assessment

The Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University, Michigan's University Affiliated Program (UAP), conducted a statewide assessment of personnel training needs in 1997. This needs assessment is structured around a Consumer-Felt Needs Model in which personnel identify their own needs for continuing education and additional preparation. The response included 4,529 professionals, paraprofessionals and higher education faculty. The topics and issues ranked most highly for training included AD/HD; brain research; learning styles; at-risk populations; legislation and policies (IDEA, Section 504, etc.); transition to adult settings; parent

and professional partnerships; assistive technology; co-teaching and collaboration; data and evaluation; curriculum and IEPs; and positive behavioral intervention.

Prepare general and special education personnel with the content knowledge and collaborative skills needed

It is essential to ensure that all personnel working with students with disabilities have the necessary skills and knowledge for meeting their diverse needs. Multiple strategies will be employed to facilitate learning among all the stakeholders concerned with educating students with disabilities. In part, this will be accomplished through communication and collaboration with other professional development personnel in Michigan (e.g., ESEA programs such as Titles I through VI, School Improvement, and Part C of IDEA).

The State Board of Education has adopted standards for professional development which will be adhered to as new learning opportunities are developed. These standards address:

The *context* of professional development:

- Understand and apply the elements of a market-driven education system;
- Understand and apply systemic change principles and anticipate change as a dynamic process;
- Contribute to the plan and design of their own intellectually rigorous professional development;
- Increase personal level of involvement in implementing a continuously learning community; and,
- Use data on student academic achievement as the foundation for selecting professional growth alternatives.

The *content* of professional development:

- Demonstrate high learning expectations for all students;
- Demonstrate continuous improvement as a facilitator of student learning;
- Demonstrate continuous progress in developing current content knowledge and its application and the skill-based and instructional strategies required to facilitate effective learning for all students; and,
- Demonstrate knowledge and use of cross-disciplinary instruction and cross-disciplinary teams to facilitate student learning.

The *process* of professional development:

- Use inquiry and reflective practice within the learning community;
- Learn from recognized resources within both the public and private sectors, from successful models, and from colleagues and others in the learning community;
- Identify personal and adult learning needs and styles, and select appropriate modes of participation;
- Implement research-based leadership strategies to support and sustain ongoing developmental activities;
- Integrate technologies as tools to assist with the curriculum development, instructional management, and assessment practices; and,
- Invest time in an ongoing process of collegial dialogue, collaborative learning, and exploration of new and/or proven instructional strategies.

A comprehensive personnel development system, including preservice and inservice, will be created through the implementation of Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIG). The framework for this system includes four hubs:

- I — Information Development
- II — Dissemination and Awareness
- III — Sustained Learning
- IV — Capacity Building and Quality Assurance

Hub I will analyze existing information and develop new knowledge to be used in learning opportunities. All hubs will rely on Hub II for disseminating updates and awareness-level information. It will be especially important for Hub III to coordinate its own information (e.g., effective instructional strategies) with that of Hub II. As Hub IV promotes system modifications and local district capacity building for improved student performance, it will be important for Hub III to incorporate facets of system improvement into its learning opportunities.

In year one, Hub III will develop training materials and opportunities for preservice and inservice learning related to functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention, one of the needs identified through the SIP analysis of student performance data. They will also collaborate with the Comprehensive Parent Services System to provide joint opportunities for in-depth skill development on parent-professional partnerships. Hub III will develop training materials and learning opportunities for preservice personnel based on information generated through the Collaborative Sites of Practice and Inquiry, a state initiated project. In the following years, Hub III will be responsible for sustained learning in implementing promising practices in transition, another priority area for improvement, and other priority topics determined through the SIP strategic planning process, the Partnership Team, and the State Board of Education. Hub III will assist the state initiated projects in the implementation of sustained learning that may be required through their grants.

Hub III guides and supports sustained learning opportunities throughout Michigan with an emphasis on local and regional supports for skill development and application. Identifying and supporting a continuous process of improvement will enhance the capacity of all members of the learning community to pursue lifelong learning. This will include, but not be limited to, skill development programs, collaborative networking among adult learners (parents, professionals, paraprofessionals, etc.), reflective dialogue, and peer coaching. With the coordinated support of the hub system, learning opportunities will be developed locally and regionally to ensure that valid needs are met effectively.

Prepare professionals and paraprofessionals in the area of early intervention with content knowledge and collaborative skills

Part C of IDEA has instituted a comprehensive personnel development system for parents, professionals, related service providers, and paraprofessionals working with infants and toddlers with disabilities birth to three years of age and their families. Part C in Michigan is known as *Early On*®. The *Early On*® Personnel Development System is responsible to:

- Develop and implement the *Early On*® Personnel Development Training System.
- Serve as a central resource by providing information about trainers, training materials, and training events.
- Develop and implement the *Early On*® Personnel Development regional technical assistance system.
- Plan and deliver opportunities for the State Interagency Coordinating Council and Local Interagency Coordinating Council members to come together.

- Promote, facilitate, and expand the *Early On®* Personnel Development System to meet the needs of state sponsored collaborative initiatives.

The *Early On®* Personnel Development System uses teams of "coaches" to provide technical assistance on a regional and local level, primarily through the Local Interagency Coordinating Council structure. Each coaching team consists of a professional and a parent of a child with special needs who work in partnership to deliver assistance.

Training is provided on a regional and statewide basis in priority areas and is available to professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents. Training priorities are set locally and regionally. The *Early On®* Personnel Development System maintains a trainer database and a comprehensive training calendar on its web site.

The *Early On®* Personnel Development System will share information with the hubs. Links will be primarily with Hub II, the center for Dissemination and Awareness, so that appropriate training opportunities are known to all stakeholder groups.

Work with institutions of higher education and other entities (preservice and inservice) to develop the capacity to support quality professional development programs that meet state and local needs

The links between the Institutions of Higher Education/Special Education (IHE/SE) and inservice personnel development activities need to be strengthened. University faculty expertise is rarely called upon in the development or delivery of inservice training. The inclusion of university faculty in local training activities also needs to be strengthened in order to increase the opportunities for faculty to form relationships with school district personnel and parents. The development of learning opportunities for university faculty and the integration of faculty into existing training will be a priority.

The hubs will serve as the mechanism for fully including the IHE/SE in personnel development activities. University faculty will have opportunities to conduct research and gather information on promising practices through Hub I, the center for Information Development. They will be included in the dissemination system developed by Hub II, and invited to participate in and, in some instances, conduct sustained learning activities by Hub III.

Work to develop collaborative agreements with other states for joint support and development of programs to prepare personnel for which there is not sufficient demand within a single state to justify support or development of such a program preparation

Four of the five largest national preservice educators of special education personnel are located in Michigan, including the largest (Eastern Michigan University). Analysis of Michigan's supply and demand data do not indicate a need for joint development of personnel preparation programs with other states at this time. If asked, Michigan will work with other states that have personnel preparation needs.

Work in collaboration with other states, particularly neighboring states, to address the lack of uniformity and reciprocity in the credentialing of teachers and other personnel

Michigan is currently exploring the revision of its standards relating to special education teachers and related service personnel. Information has been gathered regarding national standards, models, and resources. Comparisons of those models and standards to Michigan's existing

standards have been drafted. This information will be presented to the Institutions of Higher Education/Special Education committee for further discussion. The credentialing criteria of other states, especially neighboring states, will be taken into consideration as the decision-making process unfolds.

Enhance the ability of teachers and others to use strategies, such as behavioral interventions, to address the conduct of children with disabilities that impedes the learning of children with disabilities and others

In Michigan, special education has an important contribution to make to the general education environment and to all students through the use of functional behavioral assessments and positive behavioral intervention strategies. The use of positive behavioral intervention will likely impact the suspension and expulsion rates for all students especially the 25.5% suspended for disrupting education, the 16.9% suspended for fighting, and the 14.8% who were expelled for non-aggravated assault. The use of positive behavioral interventions will also increase the likelihood that students with disabilities will gain access to the general curriculum and settings, to the maximum extent appropriate, as stated in IDEA 97. Positive behavioral interventions is a topic which has been identified as one of three targeted priorities beginning with the implementation of Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities.

Statewide, regional, and local workshops and conferences have provided a foundation of training from nationally recognized entities such as Norman Kunc, Alfie Kohn, and trainers from TEACCH in North Carolina. Some of these activities have provided skill development and some have trained trainers.

Michigan will initiate an extensive sustained personnel development process in functional behavioral assessment and the delivery of positive behavioral interventions. Training will be provided to general educators, special educators, administrators, and parents. Hub III, the Center for Sustained Learning, will lead this effort; Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities will be utilized to assure systemic impact.

Michigan's approach is based on the belief that functional behavioral assessment and the use of positive behavioral interventions are inextricably connected. Strategies will emphasize conflict reduction for students and modifying environmental factors (i.e., stimuli for challenging behaviors, schedules, staffing, student groups, etc.) in order to facilitate the development of learning communities. The focus will be educative rather than eliminative (as in most behavior management) and positive behavioral intervention will be promoted in instances where challenging behaviors occur. The central theme of the training curriculum will be that challenging behaviors serve as messages which communicate unmet needs. The basic tenets of positive behavioral intervention and functional behavioral assessment are that: (1) the student's problem behavior serves a function, and (2) that problem behaviors are context related. These two tenets coupled with treating the student and his or her family in a respectful manner and emphasizing inclusion within typical school and community settings will serve as cornerstones of the training curriculum.

Acquire and disseminate to teachers, administrators, school board members, and related service personnel, significant knowledge derived from educational research and other sources and how the state will adopt promising practices, materials, and technology

Hub I, the center for Information Development, will be used to acquire information about promising practices by conducting research to develop new information, and gathering existing information for dissemination.

Hub II, the center for Dissemination and Awareness, will ensure the effective dissemination of information to the stakeholder community.

Hub III, the center for Sustained Learning, will focus specifically on fostering sustained learning activities within Michigan to promote the skills teachers, parents, and others need to implement innovative and effective practices.

Hub IV, the center for Capacity Building and Quality Assurance, will be responsible for assisting LEAs in the implementation of promising practices through technical assistance.

Recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel with disabilities and personnel from groups that are underrepresented in the fields of regular education, special education, and related services

All programs approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) must have plans for recruitment and retention of groups who are traditionally underrepresented in education and related services. For example, Northern Michigan University has a program to actively recruit Native Americans into education fields. In the first year, Hub I will gather and analyze the NCATE recruitment and retention plans from the universities in Michigan. They will also collect information from exemplary programs outside of Michigan and from national projects. This information will result in a report with recommendations to be disseminated by Hub II. The Partnership Team will set goals and strategies in this area which will be included in Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities in year two. Personnel shortages and recruitment of teachers from underrepresented groups is one of three target priorities to be addressed through Michigan's SIP/SIG.

Integrate its plan, to the maximum extent possible, with other professional development plans and activities, including plans and activities developed and carried out under other federal and state laws that address personnel recruitment and training

The recent reorganization of the Michigan Department of Education was designed to provide integration across state and federal programs. Within this reorganization, a new Office of Field Services (OFS) has integrated the major federal and state programs, with the exception of special state and federal program resources, with a focus on supporting school improvement plans at the district and building level. The office helps districts address equity issues in local school improvement plans. The OSE/EIS is providing training to the Field Services staff on IDEA 97 and will continue to work with them on addressing the needs of students with disabilities in local school improvement plans. The Department plans to establish consultant teams including OFS and OSE/EIS staff to ensure that needs of students with disabilities are addressed in the general education setting. In addition, the new Office of Standards, Assessment, and Accreditation Services (OSAAS) oversees statewide assessment and is providing the leadership for the development of a statewide accountability system.

The OSE/EIS works with both of the above offices to align resources and operations for students with disabilities and to assure continuous improvement toward a unified system of education for all students. Statewide assessment, the development of an alternate assessment, and the design of an accountability system are all currently being coordinated.

Staff from the School Development unit in the OSAAS have been assigned to OSE/EIS to assist in the development of the quality assurance/school improvement model for students with disabilities. This is to guarantee both alignment and integration of efforts for students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Staff from the Assessment unit in OSAAS have been assigned to

OSE/EIS to assist in the development of the alternate assessment for students with severe disabilities. While the development and piloting of the alternate assessment is currently supported with discretionary funds under the IDEA, it is anticipated the implementation and administration of the alternate assessment will eventually be a function of the statewide assessment program.

The Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) works closely with OSE/EIS on all matters related to personnel preparation and certification. Staff from OSE/EIS are assigned to work with OPPS on the review and approval process for programs preparing special education personnel. Current efforts are underway to align competencies for personnel preparation and the approval of such programs with NCATE and the CEC International Standards for the Preparation and Certification of Special Education Teachers.

The Office of Postsecondary Services is participating on the Transition Network Team, a state interagency policy group created to assist with the Improving Transition Practices initiative.

The Office of Curriculum, Career, and Technical Education Services is assisting the Improving Transition Practices initiative as well; staff are providing technical assistance on the Career Preparation System.

Coordination of resources and integration of effort are embedded in the design of the reorganization of the Michigan Department of Education. Directors of each of the service areas, including the State Director of Special Education, meet weekly to assure achievement of this vision. Each service area shares a single purpose: to help all schools improve the performance of all students.

Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities supports the principle that there must be adequately trained professionals to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The broad range of partnerships identified in the state improvement plan are specifically involved in the systemic improvement process to further the unique personnel development needs of Michigan. Successful implementation of the state improvement plan hinges upon the collaboration and coordination of special education personnel development programs with other professional development programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Title I now requires each State to design a system of school support teams composed of experienced teachers and others who are knowledgeable about research and practice. These teams will help schools to devise, implement, review, and refine schoolwide programs, with a focus on reforming instruction and raising performance to meet high standards. Title II Eisenhower Professional Development Grants concentrate on upgrading the expertise of teachers and other school staff to enable them to teach all children the Michigan Core Content Standards. Title IV funds may be used to help teachers and other school staff learn to utilize technology on behalf of school reform. Title X programs of National Significance support local and state efforts to improve the education of students with gifts and talents. Hub IV will assist local educational agencies in developing coordinated, collaborative activities utilizing personnel development funds from these programs and the funds available through OSE/EIS.

Promoting the collaboration between general and special educators will be a priority in order to ensure that whole school approaches and activities undertaken to benefit all students include students with disabilities. At the local level, it is anticipated that special education personnel are, and will increase actively joining the current school improvement teams, school wide initiatives, and co-facilitate the determination of student goals and objectives for all students.

The personnel development to be carried out through the hub system will increasingly connect with The Standards for Teaching and Learning that are provided within the Michigan Curriculum Framework. That is, in order to improve educational results for students with disabilities we must raise expectations for achievement that include higher-order thinking, deep knowledge, substantive conversation, and connections with the world outside the classroom. This integration with Michigan's school improvement efforts will emphasize the following for all students:

- Build connections between subject areas;
- Enhance students' abilities to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and communicate effectively;
- Use instruction to support students in learning from active, independent inquiry into life situations; and
- Shift educators' roles to increasingly serve as catalysts for students and educators to pursue lifelong learning and continuous growth.

Among the state policies that involve personnel development considerations are the State Board of Education Standards for Accreditation (approved on September 18, 1997). These have been created and approved under the auspices of Michigan Public Act 25 of 1990 (as amended). Of the ten Standards for Accreditation, at least six have implications for the personnel development activities which will be coordinated through the hubs:

Standard #2: The school's curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment system are developed collaboratively by school staff, parents, students and community, are aligned with the school district's improvement plan, written curriculum and assessment policies, and are consistent with the State Board of Education approved curriculum content standards. One quality indicator for standard #2 is that a systematic analysis of student achievement data guides the periodic review and revision of the curriculum and classroom instructional practices.

Standard #4: The school's administrative team provides continuing professional development for all educators based on the school and district's curriculum, the district's identified adult roles, and the academic goals derived from an analysis of student data, so that all educators will have the skills necessary to effectively instruct all students. One quality indicator for standard #4 include a comprehensive professional development plan developed by all stakeholders which describes time allotted, topics, schedule, evaluation, and coordination with the district plan. Another is that there are sufficient training resources so that employees increase communication, collaboration, and evaluation skills as well as promising teaching and school improvement practices. A third is that business and industry, colleges, libraries, and universities are involved as partners in collaborative staff development planning.

Standard #6: The school and district staff, parents, and community collaborate about and engage in programs and activities focused toward improving the academic performance of all students and accelerating the improvement of low achieving groups. One quality indicator for standard #6 is that parents, staff, and community members participate in regular assessment of the educational program strengths and weaknesses and the development of workable solutions and necessary resources to improve identified student achievement results.

Standard #7: The school's three to five-year improvement plan identifies appropriate improvement strategies, methods for implementation, and regular evaluation procedures to continually monitor and improve student performance on the district's core academic curriculum. One quality indicator corresponding to standard #7 is the clearly articulated alignment of the curriculum, instruction and student assessment measures to facilitate the investigation, implementation and evaluation of new teaching and learning models for improved student achievement results.

Standard #8: The school's administrative team and staff collect, analyze, and use data, on an ongoing basis, to make program improvements based on documented need, consistent with the local board of education policies and procedures on improving student achievement. One quality indicator for standard #8 is that educational staff are provided opportunities to access, design, choose, and use appropriate evaluation strategies to improve student achievement through professional development opportunities.

Standard #10: The school's administrative team allocates the necessary human, fiscal, and educational resources and interventions to raise the levels of performance for all students and to accelerate the improvement of low achieving groups, consistent with the local board of education policies and procedures. Several quality indicators support standard #10:

(a) aggregated and disaggregated student performance data are used to demonstrate progress of all students and to provide data for the development of short and long-range goals to improve student achievement; (b) sufficient educational staff, resources, and professional development opportunities are provided to assure improved student achievement results; (c) student performance assessment data are analyzed and linked to curriculum and instruction to identify teaching and teaming areas that need improvement; and (d) ongoing assessment of student achievement for the purpose of developing short and long-range goals for the sustained improvement of identified student achievement results is provided.

Provide for the joint training of parents and special education, related services, and general education personnel

Each hub will address the needs of and include input from all stakeholders concerned with improving educational performance of students with disabilities. In particular, information products and adult learning opportunities will be available to and promoted among parents, special educators, general educators, related service personnel, and administrators. Additionally, information, products for dissemination, and learning opportunities will be developed with input from these same groups. Connecting stakeholders to information and learning opportunities through the development and maintenance of an extensive database and a comprehensive web site will be the purview of Hub II, the center for Dissemination and Awareness. In 1998 Michigan successfully implemented core team training regarding IDEA 97. Core teams consisted of parents, educators, administrators, and other school personnel concerned about the education of students with disabilities. This model of joint training will be the foundation for systemic improvement.

Through Memoranda of Understanding, the Hubs will support and coordinate local, regional, and statewide efforts toward building parent and professional partnerships that benefit students with disabilities. Collaboration will occur with existing Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers, parent advisory committees, and other parent projects in Michigan (e.g., Parent Leadership Program, Family Information Exchange). Michigan's commitment to such partnerships are exemplified in the recently established Comprehensive Parent Services System. Funded by the State Board of Education (\$550,000 for fiscal year 1998-99), this system expands and enhances the support for federally funded PTI Centers and creates a coordinated network of advocacy, consultation, and training across a variety of parent-driven organizations. Utilizing the CSPD needs assessment conducted by Michigan's UAP, a joint parent-professional training model has been created to address targeted priorities for training and technical assistance. This resource, which exemplifies broad-based partnerships, will support the purpose and operations of the Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities.

Michigan has also identified a cadre of talented trainers who are parents of children or adults with disabilities. These trainers will be involved not only in training other parents but in sustained learning opportunities for related service personnel as well as general and special educators and administrators.

**Addressing Systemic Problems Identified in Federal Compliance Reviews,
Including Shortages**

The State of Michigan was last monitored by the OSEP in 1993. At that time, Michigan was cited for difficulty in meeting the 30 day initial evaluations and three year reevaluation time lines. Time lines on evaluations continues to be a problem in some districts. This monitoring citation supports the field report of insufficient supply of school psychologists. Hub I will study the personnel shortage problem in year one and will make recommendations to the Partnership Team. They will add strategies to Michigan's SIP/SIG.

Michigan was also cited for its time lines related to complaints and due process. Michigan continues its efforts to reduce time lines to investigate complaints and resolve due process hearings. However, resolution of complaints and hearings is not yet timely. The OSE/EIS is developing new models to better meet such time lines.

OSEP's monitoring of the Michigan School for the Blind and Michigan School for the Deaf also revealed areas of concern to OSEP. Both state schools were monitored in the 1996-97 school year. Findings indicated a need for both schools to establish written policies and procedures in the areas of: (1) procedural safeguards, (2) referral procedures and diagnostic systems, (3) IEP Team meeting procedures, (4) least restrictive environment, (5) programs and services, and (6) administration. Such written policies and procedures have been drafted, but not finalized. Once the written policies are finalized, training will be provided to each state school's staff and new procedures will be disseminate to LEAs and ISDs.

**Disseminating Results of the Local Capacity-Building and Improvement Projects
Funded under Section 611(f)(4)**

"Sliver" grants were allocated under state initiated projects to intermediate school districts. These grants were designated "Capacity Building Grants." The purpose of these grants is to provide for direct services and systematic improvement to improve results for students with disabilities through one or more of the following:

1. Direct services for students with disabilities who are: (a) expelled from school, (b) in correctional facilities, (c) enrolled in state operated or state supported schools, and/or (d) enrolled in Charter Schools.
2. Addressing needs or carrying out improvement strategies.
3. Adopting promising practices, materials, and technology based on research.
4. Interagency agreements.
5. Cooperative problem solving between parents and school personnel.

These flow through dollars were distributed to districts based upon the number of students with disabilities they are serving. Of the 38 ISDs reporting, many were using their 1998-99 school year capacity building grants to address behavior intervention, reduce suspension and expulsion, and to support interagency collaboratives (e.g., wraparound services).

The Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services expects to continue providing Capacity Building Grants on an annual basis. The linkage with the state improvement plan will be strengthened in the 1999-2000 school year. It is anticipated that future requests for proposals will ask districts to address one or more of the needs in the state improvement plan and that districts will demonstrate the linkages between the use of their capacity building grants and student performance data, their local improvement plans, and their school improvement plans. Hub IV,

the Center for Capacity Building and Quality Assurance, will assist school districts in aligning their capacity building strategies with Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities.

Addressing Improving Results for Children with Disabilities in the Geographic Areas of Greatest Need

Michigan's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services will conduct an in-depth analysis regarding geographic areas of greatest need. The following data will be collected and compiled geographically:

- Students eligible for free lunch
- Personnel needs
- Under-served students
- Statewide assessment scores of students with disabilities

The results of this analysis will be brought to the Partnership Team for review. Strategies will be incorporated into Michigan's Plan to Improve the Results of Students with Disabilities.

Assess, on a Regular Basis, the Extent to which the Strategies under this Subpart have been Effective

An annual review of progress on Michigan's Plan and Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities will be conducted by an external evaluator. The findings will be used in conjunction with other data to measure progress and effectiveness.

The OSE/EIS will evaluate the effectiveness of the activities implemented to meet the needs identified in Michigan's SIP. The status of Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities will be reported annually. This report will be distributed to all stakeholders by Hub II, the center for Dissemination and Awareness. Substantial revision of the state improvement plan will occur every two years by convening stakeholder groups to review student performance data, results from local improvement planning, and evaluation of the Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities in order to set new goals and objectives as needed.

Coordinate its Improvement Strategies with Public and Private Sector Resources

Stakeholders have been engaged in the state improvement planning process and have assisted the state in developing the direction of Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities. The OSE/EIS has entered into partnership agreements with many stakeholder groups, all of whom are committed to improving the educational performance of students with disabilities. The partnership agreement, called a Memorandum of Understanding, describes the nature and scope of the partners participation in Michigan's Plan to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIP) and Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities (SIG).

Many of the partners signing a Memorandum of Understanding operate in the private sector, as private non-profits. Private sector partners include:

Autism Society of Michigan
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Michigan Association of Learning Disabilities Educators
Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools

Michigan Association for Children with Emotional Disorders
Michigan Council for Exceptional Children
Michigan Federation Chapters of the Council for Exceptional Children
The ARC Michigan
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metro Detroit, Inc.

Public resources will also be coordinated through Michigan's SIP/SIG. The public agencies who have signed Memoranda of Understanding include:

Department of Community Health
Department of Corrections
Family Independence Agency
Michigan Rehabilitation Services - Michigan Jobs Commission